

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

**The Jesuit Educational  
Center for Human Development**

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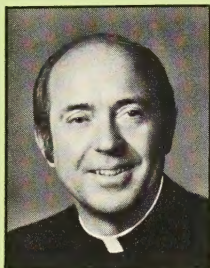


**The Development of Persons**

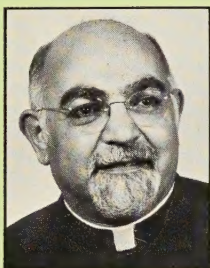
**The Spiritual Direction Relationship**

**The Future of Religious Life**

**Continuing Priestly Formation**



**EDITOR-IN-CHIEF James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.**, is a priest, physician, and psychiatrist. While working at the Harvard University Health Services during the past 12 years, Father Gill has served as psychiatric consultant to superiors of many religious congregations, formation personnel, and spiritual renewal centers throughout the world. During recent years, he has taught at the University of San Francisco, Loyola University (Illinois), St. John's University (Minnesota), the U.S. Air Force Chaplains School (Alabama), and the Graduate Theological Union (California). A member of the California Province of the Society of Jesus, Father Gill grew up in San Francisco and was ordained to the priesthood there in 1957. He has published more than 50 papers on topics related to religion, human development, community life, and psychiatry.



**SENIOR EDITOR Angelo D'Agostino, S.J., M.D.**, is a priest, physician, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst. Father D'Agostino is a member of the staff of the George Washington University Medical School in Washington, D.C., and is Chairman of the American Psychiatric Association's Committee on Religion and Psychiatry. During the past decade, he has served as Director of the Center for Religion and Psychiatry of the Washington Psychiatric Institute Foundation and as a faculty member of the Washington Theological Coalition, Washington, D.C.



**ASSOCIATE EDITOR Linda Amadeo, R.N., M.S.**, is a nurse whose clinical specialty is psychiatry. A graduate of Boston College, Miss Amadeo has counseled and taught religious men and women in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. She has served on the faculty of the Stritch School of Medicine at Loyola University in Chicago, the summer theological faculty at the University of San Francisco, and at St. John College in Cleveland. She has directed numerous workshops and programs for religious superiors, formation personnel, and spiritual directors.



**ASSISTANT EDITOR John Carroll Futrell, S.J., S.T.D.**, is a priest, author, spiritual director, and lecturer. A founder and presently a member of the staff of the Ministry Training Services in Denver, Father Futrell has directed religious renewal programs in the United States, Europe, the Far East, Australia, Africa, India, Sri Lanka, and Latin America. He was formerly codirector of the Institute of Religious Formation at St. Louis University and has taught Theology at Regis College, St. Thomas Seminary, and Iliff School of Theology in Denver during the past four years. He is a member of the Missouri Province of the Society of Jesus.

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# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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## CONTENTS

	PAGE
EDITORIAL BOARD .....	2
EDITORIAL .....	3
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR .....	4
THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE .....	6
A Challenge to Leadership and Formation	
CONTINUING PRIESTLY FORMATION .....	18
Interview with Father Dominic Maruca, S.J.	
THE SPIRITUAL DIRECTION RELATIONSHIP .....	28
THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONS .....	31
THE WAY OF US: THREE TAKES .....	42
BOOK REVIEWS .....	44
INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS .....	2
REPRINT INFORMATION .....	5

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## INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The editors are pleased to consider for publication articles relating to the ongoing work of those involved in helping other people through religious leadership and formation, spiritual direction, and counseling.

Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate to the managing editor, Charles Blackwell, 130 John St., New York, N.Y. 10038. Copy should be typewritten double spaced on 8½ x 11-inch white paper with generous margins on each page. Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 5,000 words with no more than 10 listings in the bibliography; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and bibliography. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide names of author(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

Illustrations, if any, should be submitted as high-quality, glossy, unmounted black-and-white photographic prints. Do not send original artwork.

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

All submissions should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed return envelope.

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# EDITORIAL

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## EDITOR EXEMPLIFIES FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF DEVELOPMENT

If there is any single disposition a person needs to continue developing to ever-greater maturity during adult years, it is a willingness to try something new. There are religious people who are so rigidly attached to their job, style of life, and circle of friends that they could not tolerate the anxiety that would accompany letting go of nearly all that is familiar—moving to a strange place, taking on different responsibilities, and making new acquaintances. They are not only psychologically and spiritually unavailable for new missions, but they ignore the invitations and challenges that are likely to occasion genuine, profound, and inspiring human growth.

With very mixed feelings, the editorial staff and publishers of *Human Development* have just recently watched such a step being taken at very close range. Our Senior Editor, Father Angelo D'Agostino, S.J., M.D., has accepted the difficult position of Medical Director of the Catholic Relief Services in Thailand, one of the largest agencies offering health care and food for the hundreds of thousands of refugees from Laos, Cambodia, and Viet Nam. He has moved from Washington, D.C., to Bangkok, bidding goodbye to all his friends, relatives, colleagues, patients, and acquaintances in this country. In so doing, he has built one more major step into his adulthood growth-trajectory. He was a urological surgeon, then a Jesuit, a psychiatrist, and a psychoanalyst. Now, half a world away, he will be a priest-physician, coordinating medical activities of the Catholic Relief Services with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, the International Red Cross, and several other volunteer groups. We are immensely proud of Father D'Agostino for his adaptability and generosity. At the same time, we are sad to face the year ahead knowing that he will be out of sight. His smile, experience, and enthusiasm have contributed immensely to getting *Human Development* started and charting our direction.

Since Father D'Agostino will be away for at least a year, we have invited Father John Carroll Futrell, another widely known and highly regarded Jesuit, to join our editorial staff as Assistant Editor. A world-traveling authority on spirituality, director of religious renewal programs all over the world, staff member of the Ministry Training Services in Denver, and formerly co-director at the Institute of Religious Formation of St. Louis University, Father Futrell needs no introduction to our readers who are familiar with the names of the outstanding lecturers, teachers, and writers in the fields of spirituality and religious formation today.

We are fortunate to present in this issue a far-seeing article by Father Futrell entitled *The Future of Religious Life*. Sister Madeline Birmingham makes some valuable observations about the process of selecting a spiritual director and the quality of such a relationship. In our interview with Father Dominic Maruca we are given an eyewitness report on what has been happening in priestly renewal programs under his direction. The "Development of Persons," in a way an extended editorial, examines a variety of aspects of religious formation work in the light of *Human Development's* aims.

We hope you will enjoy this issue, that Father Futrell will feel warmly welcomed, and that Father D'Agostino will be blessed in his new enterprise, particularly (as he specifically asked us to pray) by "finding God in all things, especially in the poor, sick refugees in Thailand."



James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It gives me great joy to renew my subscription to *Human Development*. Thank you for a truly professional journal dealing with holistic, healthy, and contemporary spiritual development. Keep up the good work!

Carolyn Humphreys  
Paramount, California

I like the magazine and have found articles useful for myself and fellow priests and for discussions within our Jesu Caritas prayer group. Thanks.

Father Jim Benton  
Dawson, Nebraska

I think this is one of the best periodicals for this time. It serves many purposes for me personally and for others as I share the copy. It can serve as an evaluative instrument as well as being informational and educational in a language that the average person can understand. The contents have helped me to get in touch with my own feelings and have also helped in my dealings with others, particularly in helping me to understand where they might be coming from. Thank you very much for making all this information available in one magazine.

Sister Petronilla Metzger  
Fargo, North Dakota

I enjoy *Human Development* tremendously. My only hope is that you reverse your decision about language. I believe that the language issue is important as a reflection of our beliefs and values; therefore, your decision to continue with sexist language is disappointing. Congratulations on a journal that has a good choice of articles that are well written and address a need in today's society. Please renew my subscription.

Sister Mary Galeone  
Bronx, New York

A brief note to congratulate you and those who are making *Human Development* possible. From the vantage point of the Bishop's Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, I see a continued need for such information on the part of our priests. Effective ministry, it seems to me, also has a basis in self-knowledge and the utilization of preventive medicine such as your publication suggests. May *Human Development* continue to grow in audience and effectiveness.

Rev. Msgr. Colin A. MacDonald  
Executive Director, Bishops' Committee on  
Priestly Life and Ministry,  
Washington, D.C.

I have read with great interest the first three copies, and have already found substantial help for my course on the theology and practice of spiritual guidance. I am likewise distributing the order blanks that come with each issue among my students. I am convinced that, without jeopardizing the imperating role of theology, we must make the best possible use of the rich treasury of psychological insights that have been made available to us by you who are professionals in the fields of psychology and psychiatry. Thank you for performing such a needed service.

Jordan Anorann, O.P.  
Director, Institute of Spirituality  
Pontifical University of St. Thomas  
Rome

This is a guilt letter. I did something that I do not like to do and would always choose against doing if I had time. I copied three of your articles for an educational conference that I was doing. It is a long story about how I did not have time to get in touch with you prior to the conference and how busy everything was and how your offices were closed on the weekend. But I am sure you don't want to hear the whole story.

I made 150 copies of three articles: the two on "Stresses of Leadership" and another one on "Anger, Hostility, and Aggression." All three were excellent and covered the material much more thoroughly than I could have done in my presentation. At the conference I did tell the audience where I had gotten the articles from and gave them the address for the magazine. Let me know what I need to do. If there is a charge, please bill me. Your last edition was excellent. I might even use some of the articles in the future, but I will check it out prior to

doing so—so I don't have to live with this guilt. I'm sure your magazine is planning some articles on guilt and especially guilt in Irish Catholic religious.

M. O'G.  
Cleveland, Ohio

*Editor's note:* We happen to be preparing such an article on guilt. To alleviate the present pangs, there will be no billing or litigation; just say, if you would, three Hail Marys for the well being of *Human Development*.

## ATTENTION: New subscribers to HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Issues I and II are out of print. If you wish to order complete copies of issues III or IV, enclose \$5.00 for each complete copy and simply indicate the appropriate roman numeral, i.e., Fall Issue III, Winter Issue IV.

To order reprints of articles that have appeared in previous issues of HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, simply note the identification numbers on your subscription coupon. [Cost—\$1.50 each (U.S.); \$2.00 each (all others)] **Minimum order \$6.00**

### **I (Spring 1980)**

1. Spiritual Direction
2. The Stresses of Leadership  
Part I
3. A 1980 Look at Depression
4. Apostolic Health

### **II (Summer 1980)**

1. A Superior Who Cares
2. Coping with Stress in the 1980s  
Part II
3. Religious Formation as It Looks  
Today
4. Burnout
5. Sex Differences and Stereotypes
6. Anger, Hostility, and Aggression  
Part I
7. Dorotheos of Gaza

### **III (Fall 1980)**

1. Learning Through Leadership
2. Piecing Out the Map
3. Homosexuality Today
4. Indispensable Self-esteem
5. Consciousness Change
6. Managing Anger, Hostility, and  
Aggression Part II

### **IV (Winter 1980)**

1. Celibate Anxiety
2. Tomorrow's Lay Ministry: Interview  
with Brother Loughlan Sofield, S.T.
3. The Religious Alcoholic
4. The Poverty Paradox
5. Conference Report—Spiritual  
Direction: An Encounter with God
6. Shape of a Day

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# THE FUTURE OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

## Challenge to Leadership and Formation

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JOHN CARROLL FUTRELL, S.J.

**T**he rapidity of change in the secular culture since World War II has brought about dramatic changes in all elements of the Church, perhaps most visibly in the religious life. This has left many present-day religious with a feeling of foreboding about the future. Will the fundamental, historic identity of the religious life be altogether lost in some radically new type of Christian community of corporate mission? Will the religious life simply cease to exist except as a monument in books about the past? Will religious be led by fear to return to outmoded customs, hoping to survive by clinging to externals, while dooming themselves to extinction through failure to adapt to the signs of the times?

Religious who are in positions of authority or who are responsible for the initial or ongoing formation of the members are called to provide leadership to their communities in this challenging situation. The challenge of the present is the shaping of the future in the Lord. Otherwise, the future will shape us, perhaps in a way quite opposed to the values of Jesus Christ. We, however, can understand our present only in light of our past.

For more than 20 years, I have been living and working in many places in the global Church. During most of those years I have been engaged in giving workshops and courses to aid renewal in religious life. This article is the result of my reflections on these experiences and my speculations on the future of religious life (it is hoped with some realistic foundation). I shall begin with a brief overview of the recent past of religious life.\* Then, it will be possible to reflect on our present and the indications for our future discovered in the signs of the times. Finally, I shall offer some personal speculations about the future of religious life, con-

cluding with suggestions on the attitudes required to lead communities to face the future in the Lord.

### BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE RECENT PAST

**The Fifties and the Early Sixties.** Almost until World War II, the Church in the United States was an oppressed minority. Catholic immigrants often arrived on these shores illiterate and impoverished. Even as some became competent in skills valuable to society, they would be accepted in positions of power or prestige only if they renounced their religion and joined the prevailing secular culture. Priests and religious, on the other hand, were forced to exercise leadership in nearly all fields requiring education and administrative ability. To overcome the effects of segregation a self-imposed ghetto was created, resulting in a remarkably complete, separate system of education from primary school through university and professional preparation, as well as separate health-care facilities and social services. Religious institutes responded to the times with self-sacrificing generosity, and in a remarkably short period, they operated large institutions and brought the Catholic immigrants' children and grandchildren to a competence equal to their non-Catholic peers. It is because of this history that the election of John F. Kennedy to the presidency in 1960 was such a tremendous symbol to Catholics of what had been accomplished in a few generations by the sacrifices and hard work of religious and priests.

During these decades the life-style of religious communities was visibly frugal and austere. This was partially due to the nineteenth century asceticism that preached that doing difficult things was meritorious and would strengthen the will to practice virtues. At the same time, it was a manifestation of the general sociologic phenomenon that people in service organizations naturally tend to adopt the life-style of those whom they serve. The

\* This overview is of the history in the United States. Religious in different cultures locate themselves analogously at different stages of the process described here.

Catholics being served were, in the beginning, the materially poor, and religious tended to adopt the life-style of these "social subjects" and to retain it until the mid-sixties, even though the persons being served had become increasingly affluent.

Until the late forties, the pattern of formation of religious women had been to begin apostolic work immediately after the novitiate, using summer vacations or other free periods to pursue academic degrees. The Sisters' Formation Conference was founded during the late forties in response to the recognition that earlier professional formation was required. During the fifties and early sixties, many sisters benefited from these programs and completed graduate degrees before beginning apostolic work.

Men's religious institutes, for the most part, had seen and acted on the need for such professional formation much earlier. It was taken for granted that spiritual formation would be adequately handled by the religious institutes. However, most formation programs simply repeated the patterns of former generations: uniform customs of prayer, life-style, authority, and obedience. This had more or less suited the acculturation of the members until World War II, by which time it had become increasingly out of phase with and even contradictory to the acculturation of a new generation. Consequently, many religious were wounded and bleeding and in need of healing rather than growing in authentic religious identity. Thus, during the late sixties, many professionally sophisticated religious found their spiritual formation was not at all at the level they required. This led some to leave their religious institutes.

However, during the fifties and sixties, until Vatican II, most religious institutes experienced a great increase in members and in institutional apostolic works. Schools were built, colleges and universities became larger, health-care facilities were expanded, and social-service organizations reached out more and more. It seemed that apostolates would constantly grow, and the high numbers of vocations would guarantee capacity to staff them. Thus, this period was a time of expansion and complacency.

**The Late Sixties.** Religious, along with the rest of the Church, experienced Vatican II as an explosive shifting of a way of life that had, for a few generations, appeared immutable. The document *The Church in the Modern World* articulated the post-World War II consciousness of the Church (albeit, tardily). The Church recognized that the secular culture had been catapulted into the most tremendous change since the Renaissance. It acknowledged the call to adapt the expression of our unchanging identity as followers of Jesus Christ and as the People of God. This insight was repeated as the foundation of authentic renewal of religious institutes in the document *Perfectae Caritatis*. Religious were called upon to renew their Gospel vision

of Jesus, shaped by the spirit of their founder and the sound traditions of their heritage (theologically, the charism of the institute), and in light of this, to adapt their expression of this Spirit-given identity to the world that was emerging.

The immediate response of most religious to the call to renewal was psychologically and historically inevitable, given the fact that so many of them had been deeply hurt by the failure to recognize earlier the need to adapt religious formation and community living and authority structures to contemporary acculturation. Given the chance to get out from under the burden of inherited customs, many felt an elated, romantic euphoria and echoed the principal of Jean Jacques Rousseau that if structures were removed, the "noble savage" would emerge and authentic renewal would happen automatically. The call of *Perfectae Caritatis* was reversed in practice. It was felt that adaptation through changing external structures would result in deep interior renewal. Indeed, for many the degree of renewal was measured by the number of external changes. Some persons looking back at this time call it the period of "furniture moving." There was also a response to the need to be healed from the wounds of past practices, above all in the dimension of authority and obedience. Recognizing that many insufferable forms and structures needed to be changed, many religious unconsciously rejected substantial values of the religious life. The style of exercising authority, which demanded radical change, was identified by some with the function of authority. Since the style had to go (few doubted this), it became impossible to exercise the function.

Vatican II consistently called for affirmation of the world, created good by God, and for moving away from the negative spiritual vocabulary that, since the seventeenth century, had confused the New Testament world—characterized by an attitude closed to God—with the physical world. Many religious enthusiastically and uncritically adopted this affirmation of the world and ended by identifying the sacred and the secular and agreeing that God was dead. A theology of nonprayer was taught and espoused by many who argued that personal prayer revealed an individualistic "Jesus-and-I" attitude, while personal relationships and social action were the only real prayer. Religious echoed the stress of the secular culture on self-fulfillment and "Do your own thing!"

The euphoria of religious simply reflected that of people in general at this time. It was believed that through our technology, which enabled us to walk on the moon, we could transform the physical universe into the Garden of Eden. We already controlled birth and felt that through medical advances we would come to control death. Economic management would bring universal prosperity to the world, and political management would bring peace to the global village. The real reason that

God died was that we are a very pragmatic people; what has no real utility has no real existence, and God was no longer needed. We thought that human ingenuity would produce utopia. Religious, too, were optimistic that through psychologic techniques, like sensitivity sessions, communities of love would flourish and thus, group dynamics sessions replaced retreats. Management know-how would sort out and make perfect our institutional organization and our choice of relevant apostolic works. The political skills into which all of us had been acculturated from childhood (through group pressure, psychologic bribery, and power plays) would bring about the kind of renewal our faction knew was best for the entire community and remake it in our own image and likeness. Inevitably, this attitude generated increasing polarization among the members of religious institutes.

Along with the affirmation of the world came a rapid assimilation of the life-style of the social subject being served. The grandchildren of the immigrants were largely affluent, and they were the majority of those being served by apostolic institutions. Religious began more and more to live the way of upper-middle-class families and unconsciously fell prey to a creeping consumerism, finding more and more things necessary for life and ministry. Because all of this was new for religious and a breath of fresh air after the years of feeling stifled under archaic customs and a negative vocabulary, euphoria continued longer in us than in our secular peers.

Fairly soon the romantic hopes of contemporary culture for creating heaven on earth were dashed to the ground, and extreme depression replaced it, together with free-floating anxiety about the future and a feeling of being caught in the group guilt of a society that had failed to fulfill these hopes. Technology, instead of making the world beautiful, had so polluted it that there was fear we could not live on this planet much longer. Poverty and social injustice grew rather than being obliterated. Foolish wars erupted that no power could pacify. There grew a rage for answers—for the answer to the ultimate questions about human life and death. People yearned for a saviour to redeem them from the human condition. There was frantic searching for transcendent experience. Films, novels, drama, poetry, art, music, drugs, cults—all expressed these deep desires. Any historian of religious anthropology would identify these as signs of religious revival, universal in the history of religions.

What the culture of the late sixties gave voice to was the overpowering need to find the sacred in the secular while at the same time transcending it—to find the divine in the human and to be saved by it. For a Christian, the secular world was seeking to know Jesus Christ. However, these were the deeper signs of the times, and many religious missed them altogether while adapting to more superficial elements of the culture that really challenged Chris-

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## Most of the religious who stayed had been through a vocational crisis.

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tians to take a countercultural stance. While the secular culture was undergoing a religious revival during the last years of the sixties, many religious were still feverishly trying to be relevant to 1965, not noticing that the world of 1969 was already radically different.\*

Gradually the romantic euphoria of religious at Vatican II gave way to depression. External adaptations did not automatically bring authentic renewal. Some, seeing their hopes dashed, decided to seek a meaningful life by leaving their religious institutes. Others departed for other reasons, and the exodus became massive. Few new candidates applied for admission. The choice of apostolic works became more and more a source of polarization as did decisions about community life-style. A general malaise was felt as well as fears about the future. Ultimately, this was a time of desolation.

**The Early Seventies.** After desolation brings persons to experience their radical need of God, there follows an intense seeking of Him. Thus, many of those religious who remained within their institutes experienced a profound spiritual renewal during the early seventies. This coincided with the growth of group consciousness prevalent in contemporary culture, and led to many movements designed to enable persons to experience God in communities. Charismatic renewal, the Focolare Movement, Marriage Encounter, and the like proliferated.

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\* These reflections were stimulated by a brilliantly insightful workshop given by Michael J. Buckley, S.J., on "The Ecology of Community."

erated and prospered. Houses of prayer were opened. Prayer experiences of a wide variety were offered. Silent retreats returned, especially individually directed ones lasting, at times, 30 days, although people preferred to make retreats in groups. Workshops in spiritual discernment and in discovering the charism of the institute were in great demand. Spiritual direction was widely sought. Books on prayer and on spiritual growth became popular once again.

Most of the individual religious who stayed had been through a vocational crisis: "Since so many have left, among them good friends whom I thought were more committed than myself, and since it is so easy to leave, why don't I do so?" This crisis led these persons to discover, in the depths of their hearts, "I stay because God calls me to." The obvious conclusion was, "Then, I had better get serious about it." So, religious prayed again. For many it was a rediscovery of what had been cherished and relished in the past and a renewed enjoyment of the happiness of an encounter with God. It was "first fervor" a second time around. Ultimately, this was a time of consolation.

Nevertheless, as is often the case during a time of consolation, there were dangers in this development requiring delicate discernment. There was the temptation to seek sensible consolation for its own sake rather than to seek the God of consolation. The thrust toward interiority could dull the sense of mission to the world and become an escape from its complex contemporary challenges to religious. Fragmentation of communities occurred and particular groups identified specific spiritual movements as the only way to grow in the Lord, even co-opting "the renewal" to refer to their own particular approach. This led to dogmatism ("Unless you receive the Holy Spirit according to our vocabulary and gestures, you do not receive Him at all!") and elitism and, so, to a new kind of polarization. There developed a faddishness about such things as discernment and directed retreats. At gatherings of religious you would sometimes hear one religious ask another with complacent surprise, "You mean that you have not made a 30-day retreat?" Nevertheless, this was generally a time of consolation.

**The Late Seventies.** Significant developments in the renewal of religious institutes were stimulated by ongoing chapters and, eventually, by the call of the Sacred Congregation of Religious to frame definite constitutions after the years of experimentation. Religious were moving more and more toward consolidation and realization. They felt that the good effects of the preceding decade, which had embodied so much and such varied experimentation, should now be integrated into the lives of their communities and that the bad effects should be eliminated. There was an increasing desire to grow in a sense of corporateness—to experience themselves as members of faith communities of

corporate mission. After a time of simplistic and dogmatic convictions about what are and are not meaningful and timely apostolic works, there was a developing appreciation of the extreme complexity of these choices and of the need for real communal discernment. The desire to incarnate authentically in community life-styles the corporate identity given by the charism and to give group expression to shared faith and to solidarity with the poor and oppressed of our world was increasingly felt.

More slowly and painfully, recognition was growing of the need for authentic, skillful spiritual leadership within communities that would initiate and monitor the process of renewal and reach out to the slow, the wounded, and those in need of help and healing. However, tension around this desire is still high because of the fear of empowering authority to function, lest it fall back into the insufferable old style.

All of this has brought religious to acknowledge the need for fidelity in dryness—to "hang in there" in prayer, even when it is arid, and to maintain the process of renewal without counting on instant results. Integration takes time.

## TODAY AND THE FUTURE

**Signs of the Times in the Secular Culture.** The role of persons who are in authority or who are responsible for shaping the future in religious formation is to provide leadership and assistance to persons and communities in meeting the challenge of the present in a way that will shape the future into an authentically discerned, lived response to God's word. Looking to the signs of the times within the secular culture in which we are called to be religious communities of corporate mission, what can we expect our cultural context to be in the near future—between now and the year 2000 A.D.?

One indication can be seen in the occupational division of people on the planet, which has shifted within the last 130 years from primarily agriculture to primarily industry. Now, an even more rapid shift is in progress, and, by the year 2000, the chief occupation of persons will be that of service, while machines and silicon microchips will replace farmers and laborers. This rapid change has drastically affected family life and social, economic, and political structures, bringing about vast new arenas of tension in human relationships. These will increase enormously.

During the same brief historical period, we have moved from monarchy to democracy to a profound confrontation of rigidly socialistic and capitalistic systems. Added to this is the coming economic confrontation between the developed and underdeveloped nations. Still remembering what the West did to them during centuries of political colonialism, the underdeveloped nations see that they continue to be enslaved by economic colonialism: their raw materials are the product of

cheap labor and are sold to the West for a pittance, fashioned into objects by our highly paid workers, and reimported to be sold back at inflated prices. These less fortunate people hear of our workers striking for a bigger slice of the affluent life-style ("We shall eat cake!"), which, since the economic imbalance is what makes the Western good life possible, leaves them scrambling for bread. While profiting from Western tourists whose presence provides money and jobs, these people feel bitter resentment toward the holiday-makers who are living, breathing, and spending proof of the worldwide imbalance of wealth, sharply symbolized by their very ability to travel. These people of the Third World—Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans—with their swelling populations, are angrily searching for a turnabout of world eco-

nomic structures. The wild wind will be reaped, and revolutionary changes in our economic systems and radical changes in our life-style will certainly follow.\*

In the West, our naive optimism that technology was a tool that would enable us to beautify human life and the world has given way to the numbing realization that technology has become like the weather, blindly affecting our multidimensional interrelationships in ways that we can adjust to but cannot control, as, for example, when a power failure paralyzes a great city or our energy supply is threatened.

Confronted with the brute fact that families can no longer respond to social needs, such as the care of the sick and the old, people have had to accept the inevitability of burgeoning social-welfare sys-

## EXPERIENCE OF RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

EARLY  
**1970s**

**THRUST TOWARD  
INTERIORITY**

**VS**

**SENSE OF MISSION  
TO THE WORLD**

LATE  
**1970s**

**INCREASING SENSE  
OF CORPORATENESS**

**&**

**NEED FOR COMMUNAL  
DISCERNMENT**

EARLY  
**1980s**

**RECOVERED  
UNDERSTANDING  
OF RELIGIOUS  
LIFE AND VOWS**

**&**

**RADICALLY  
NEW SHAPES  
OF MINISTRY**

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**Now that I know what  
I can do, what do the  
needs of the church  
call me to do, whether  
I want to do it or not.**

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tems. There is no alternative. All of this has brought about a growing sense of individuality lost; we experience ourselves more and more as numbers on a list of statistics or as dots in a computer program. This has led to a struggle against being absorbed into the mass anonymity, causing people to join others in like-minded groups. Polarized by conflicting ideologies, each of these groups seeks to influence as many people as possible in favor of or in opposition to particular ideologies or political systems through the manipulation of mass-media advertising, brainwashing, or violence. Faced with the crucial personal decisions forced on them by the great variety of opposed positions and cast adrift by the breakdown of trust in traditional values and institutions, some people flee to mass movements or cults. Frustrated by the failure to impose their own systems on society, some groups erupt in terrorism, a perverse but desperate cry for help from a realm of disappointed hopes.

In reaction against the pressures of mass manipulation, the secular culture has been marked by a strong narcissism in recent years. "I want to be me" seems to justify demanding that other people take someone just as he is, however much this impinges on their own rights. Individuals search out others who are like-minded and their cry becomes "We want to be us!" The rest of society must accept the group as it is, in ideology and life-style. To resist is to invite violence. There is no sense of interdependence, no give and take, and groups are doomed to mutual confrontation. This attitude was frighteningly articulated by the leader of Italy's Red Brigade: "We want it all, and we want it now!"

In the face of all this, persons all over the world experience a growing sense of helplessness as they

are drawn into the unavoidable global interdependence and conflicts that mark the dimensions of contemporary life. They feel a disconcerting anxiety as they wait for the terrors of the times ahead.

**Signs of the Times in the Religious Life.** People who are members of religious institutes are inevitably influenced by the culture within which they live. Thus, for example, we find much narcissism in religious today, especially among the young acculturated ones but also in older religious. Narcissism can be nurtured by the revived spiritual dimension and by the demands of religious formation, which necessarily set up a self-preoccupied psychologic dynamic. For those in formation, the criterion for choice of ministries quite rightly is: "What can I do? Do I want to do it?" Within apostolic communities, after formation the criterion must be: "Now that I know what I can do, what do the needs of the Church call me to do—whether I want to do it or not?" Similarly, choices about community life-style in formation communities are shaped by the fact that these communities are intended to minister to the members so that they will grow. However, in apostolic communities the criterion of life-style must be the apostolic mission of the group within the Church, as this shapes the way of life of the members. Yet, even older religious within apostolic communities can be acculturated into narcissism because of the need for personal renewal or adjustment to new forms of religious life and ministries. This can also happen simply from the desire to "make up for what I missed," because of having been in formation before Vatican II.

What is presently manifested in many religious institutes is a desire to come to a shared clarity about the fundamental identity of religious life and the vows, especially of the vow of obedience and the function of authority in faith communities of corporate mission within the Church. It has been painfully recognized that until a group of persons is truly of one mind on identity questions, all questions about community life-style and choice of ministries are doomed from the start to superficial or divisive answers. There is a desire on the part of religious to form communities capable of true communal discernment and a growing understanding of what is demanded in order to fulfill such communities' prerequisites. At the same time, there is an increasing acceptance of the painful fact that this process of developing a basic religious identity and of becoming discerning communities will involve the loss of some members who will not identify with the corporate identity and will not commit themselves to the consequences of living it out together. Some religious institutes will cease to exist altogether, becoming monuments in the his-

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\* Futrell, John Carroll: "Impressions of an Itinerant Preacher," *America*, May 31, 1980, pp. 457–460.

tory books along with the 70% of religious congregations and orders founded since the beginning of the religious life within the Church. Fewer persons will become religious, but those that do will be persons of radical commitment to vocational identity who are able to adapt to the changing times. The human community of the Church itself will undergo profound transformations because of a shift from the hierarchical and cultural control of the declining Church of the West to the rapidly growing "Third Church" of Asia and Africa.

The criterion of our efforts to shape the future must be our religious identity if we are to maintain the continuity of the Holy Spirit (which is our own charism within the Church) across the sometimes radical discontinuity of expression of the charism in community life-styles and in choice of ministries demanded by our times. With this criterion of our religious identity clear, shared, and owned by all members, we must boldly discern and respond to the call of the Lord as we hear it today. We must be

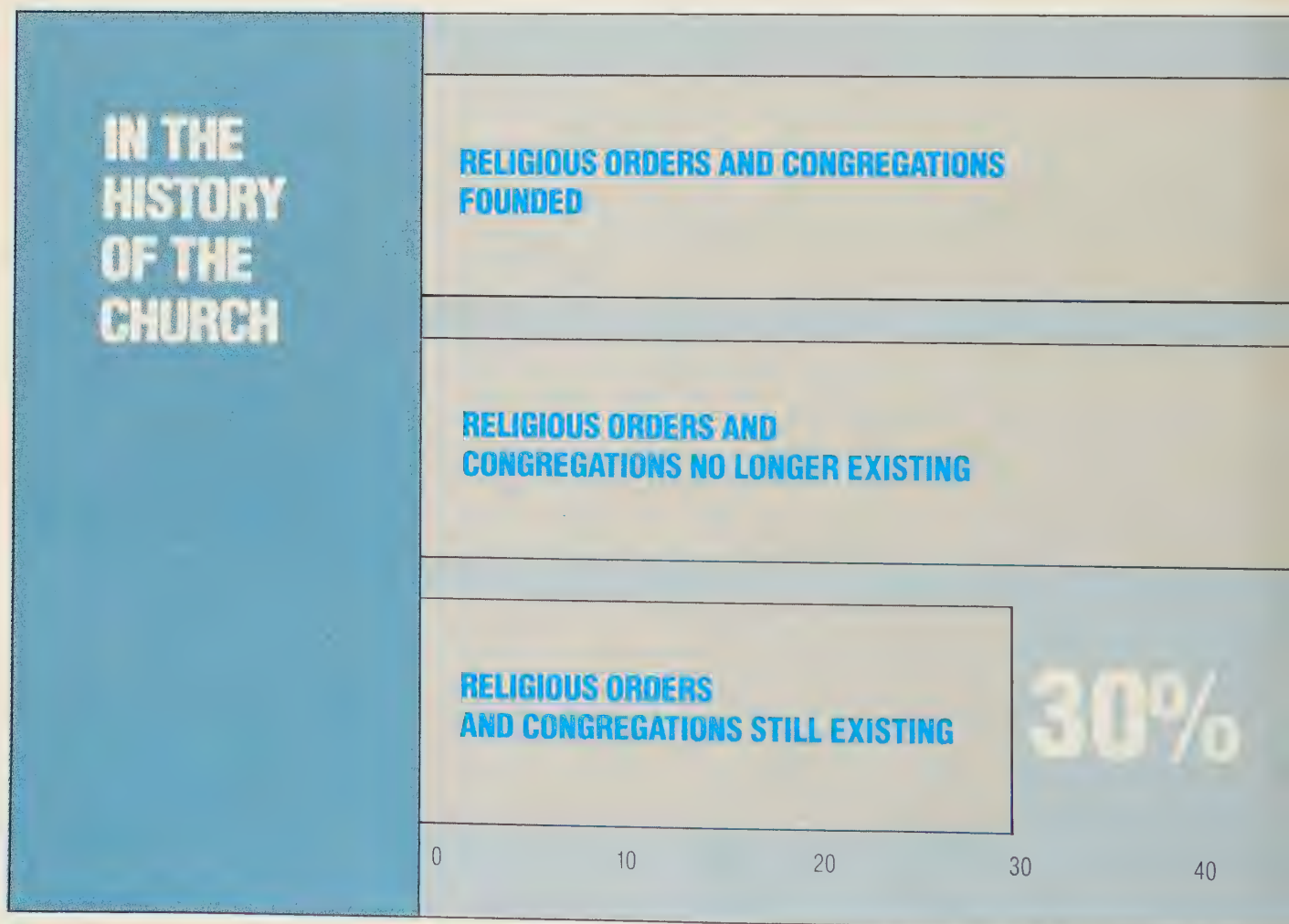
who we are by our charism and *do* the mission of our charism in radically new ways.

## SPECULATIONS ABOUT THE FUTURE

Looking concretely to the future of religious life, I can offer only one man's guesses—speculations that I hope will stimulate the speculations of others. I foresee among religious and within their communities:

**A Deepened Life of Faith and Prayer.** By experiencing in profound prayers one's own personal identity in Christ (the charism all members of the institute share), each individual will surrender to the corporate consequences of living out their identity as a self-surrender to God.

This prayer will sustain fidelity in dryness and will not represent a search for consolation for its own sake. It will be a prayer rooted concretely in the individual's being missioned and nurtured by the ministries to which he is called and by the



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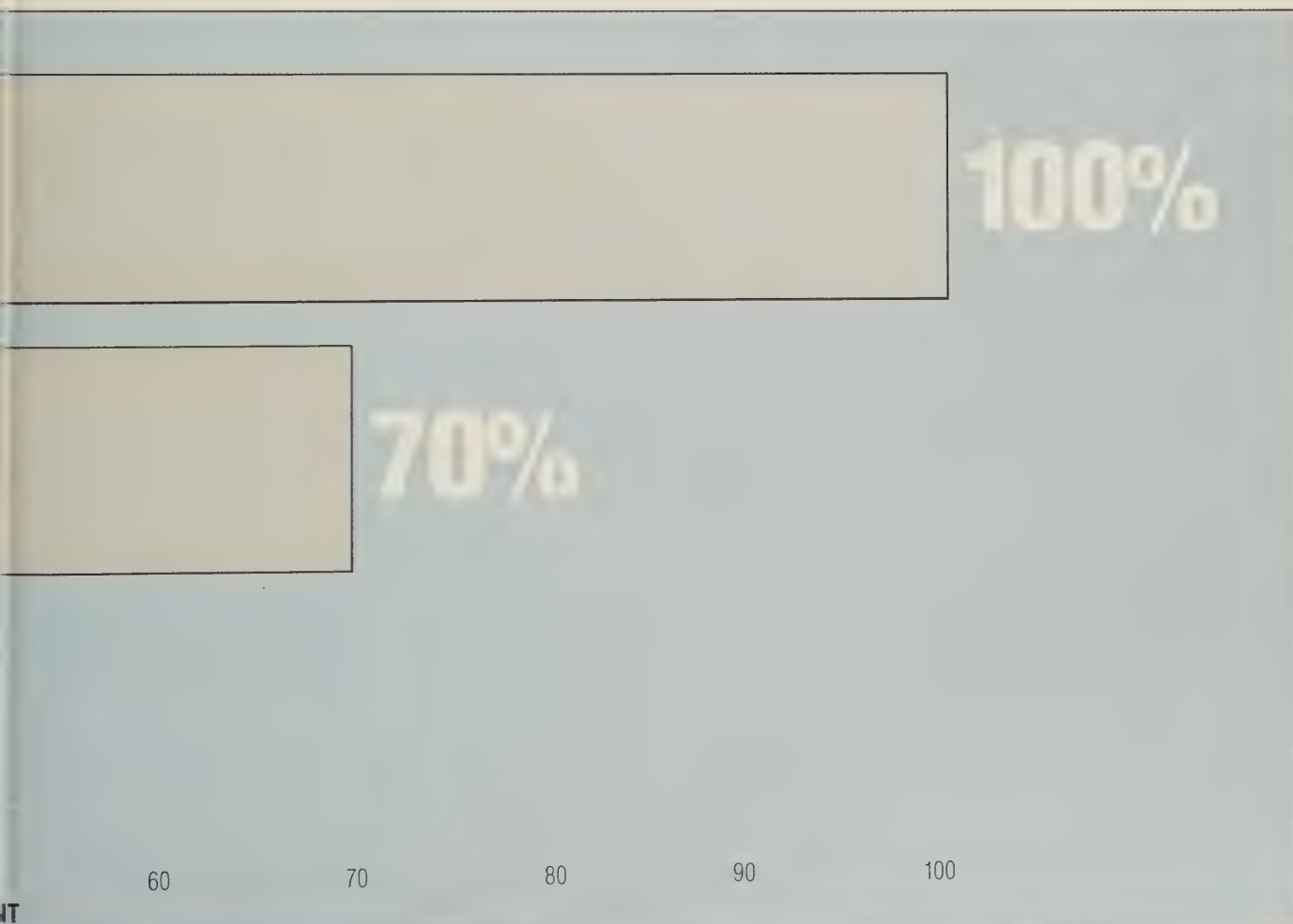
**We must be who we are  
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people to whom he is sent. This prayer will enable a religious to live and minister out of the faith vision of all reality, so that service to the human needs of people will be seen as bringing the Kingdom to be and as communicating to all the people he serves that "Christ is in them," calling them to live out this experience in their relationships and in their social, political, and economic structures.

This faith and prayer will sustain a life of continual, authentic spiritual discernment as the complex decisions constantly forced upon us by the ambiguity of contemporary life are faced. It will be, therefore, a prayer of finding God in all things and a prayer of a contemplative in action.

**A Profoundly Shared Experience.** Through ongoing, mutual communication on the faith level, the members of religious communities will possess a truly corporate awareness of the shared religious identity given to us by the Holy Spirit in our common charism. This corporate awareness will generate a dynamic field of authentic, common criteria



for corporate choices, responsibility, and accountability. Such criteria will enable corporate choices of community life-style as shaped by the call to corporate mission, even when, in some communities this may involve a priority of ministering to individuals who still need healing. The criteria will also enable the corporate sorting out of results of experiments that must go on.

Corporate awareness and criteria will enable a truly corporate choice of ministries. Even when the process of choice is originated by the initiative and input of an individual member, who may be the one chosen to carry out our mission, each member is truly sent to ministry by the community, and this fact will be felt by all.

Finally, the corporate awareness will inevitably draw people toward some kind of corporate expression of faith, prayer, worship, and a general life-style that embodies the religious identity of the shared charism that calls them to corporate mission to these people, in this place, at this time, within this culture, and through these ministries.

**A Recovered, Shared Understanding of Religious Life and Vows Within the Church.** The recovered understanding of the continuing, historic identity of religious life as a specific vocation within the Church will lead to authentic religious living and, so, will overcome the acculturated secularism and consumerism that have subtly invaded many of us. Recovered understanding of the fundamental meaning of the vows will exchange the hidden criteria of possessions, pleasure, and power with criteria for authentically living the vows today.

**Poverty.** Evangelical poverty will be expressed in corporate life-style through simplicity, frugality, and a sense of solidarity with the victims of injustice. According to the signs of the times, ways will be found to pay witness to anticonsumerism, anti-exploitation of others for selfish purposes, and antieconomic structures that victimize people. I foresee some very painful, quite radical choices in this area.

**Chastity.** Practical recognition will be given to the need to integrate affectivity, sexuality, and friendship with authentic living of evangelical chastity. With the old, external protections necessarily gone and within a secular culture that is not only permissive but also powerfully seductive and the purveyor of an ideology that affective expression must be genital, the consecrated celibate must be authentically honest and, with the help of a spiritual director, learn to give true, affective expression nongenitally. Religious communities must provide the affective base of "where I go home" to each member, and they must support deep, affective friendships both within and outside of the community.

**Obedience.** Religious will gradually overcome the baggage of reaction against old styles of exercising authority and the fear of falling back into them, along with the consequent resistance to allowing

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authority to function. We shall rediscover the necessity of this function in any human community of persons coming together for a common purpose. We shall, then, empower some among our companions to carry out this function by accepting the consequent demands of obedience. Truly communal discernment that provides evidence for the final, unifying decision of the authority will enable exercise of the authority function and thus bring to realization the authentic meaning of participative collegiality. Through deepened faith and prayer and obedience to the unifying command of the companion with authority religious will rediscover the experience of saying "yes" to the actual word of God at that time. We shall accept our accountability to God through our accountability to the whole community, represented by the human instrument of authority.

**Radically New Shapes of Ministry.** The brute fact of limited resources, both of persons and of material instruments of apostolate, will finally force discernment of the needs of today's world and of the ways God calls us to minister in meeting these needs. Our discernment will lead us to move consciously toward outreach to the poor and the oppressed. Knowing that poor, oppressed people are also among the affluent, we shall recognize with clarity who they are and how we are called to minister to their needs. We shall not deceive ourselves that old methods and old apostolic works meet these needs if in actuality they do not. It seems to me that by discerning the signs of our times, many religious congregations founded during the last two or three centuries will be brought back to reaching out directly to the materially poor

## CHOICES ABOUT COMMUNITY LIFE-STYLES

IN  
FORMATION  
COMMUNITIES

FOR THE  
GROWTH OF THE  
MEMBERS

IN  
APOSTOLIC  
COMMUNITIES

FOR THE  
SAKE OF THE  
MISSION

and the socially oppressed through their ministries. This will call them to a simplicity or frugality of life-style analogous to that which characterized the founding generation. In a sense, we are the victims of the apostolic success gained through the sacrifices of those who have gone before us, perhaps, above all, in the apostolate of education. They went out to the poor and oppressed and did such a good job that we find ourselves serving the affluent grandchildren of those people. Now, we seem to be called to move back toward today's poor and oppressed. The social subject that we serve will condition (as it does now) our own life-style, and we shall move from consumerism to frugality.

Radical new shapes of ministry will result in a predominant pattern of team ministry among laity and clergy. This will bring about and express a deeper experience of the whole Church as a faith community of corporate mission, exercised both through large institutions and smaller teams and affecting structures of institutionalized injustice

and the persons who are the victims of oppression. A deepened experience of Church through team ministries will demythologize idealistic images of a perfect Church and, paradoxically, call forth a much more profound love of and loyalty to the messy, human community of the Church. It will deepen Paschal faith that God will bring new life, even out of the sinfulness of the Church.

The challenge to new ministries will enable religious to recognize much more clearly that corporate ministry means a variety of ways to carry out a broad, unified vision of shared mission, rather than the requirement that common works be corporate.

Team ministries will clarify the specific roles for persons who come from different vocational identities within the Church as laity, clergy, or religious with distinct charisms. This will help religious overcome the apostolic imperialism that makes us think we are called to do everything ourselves, along with its implied triumphalism, which makes us feel that unless we do something, it will not be

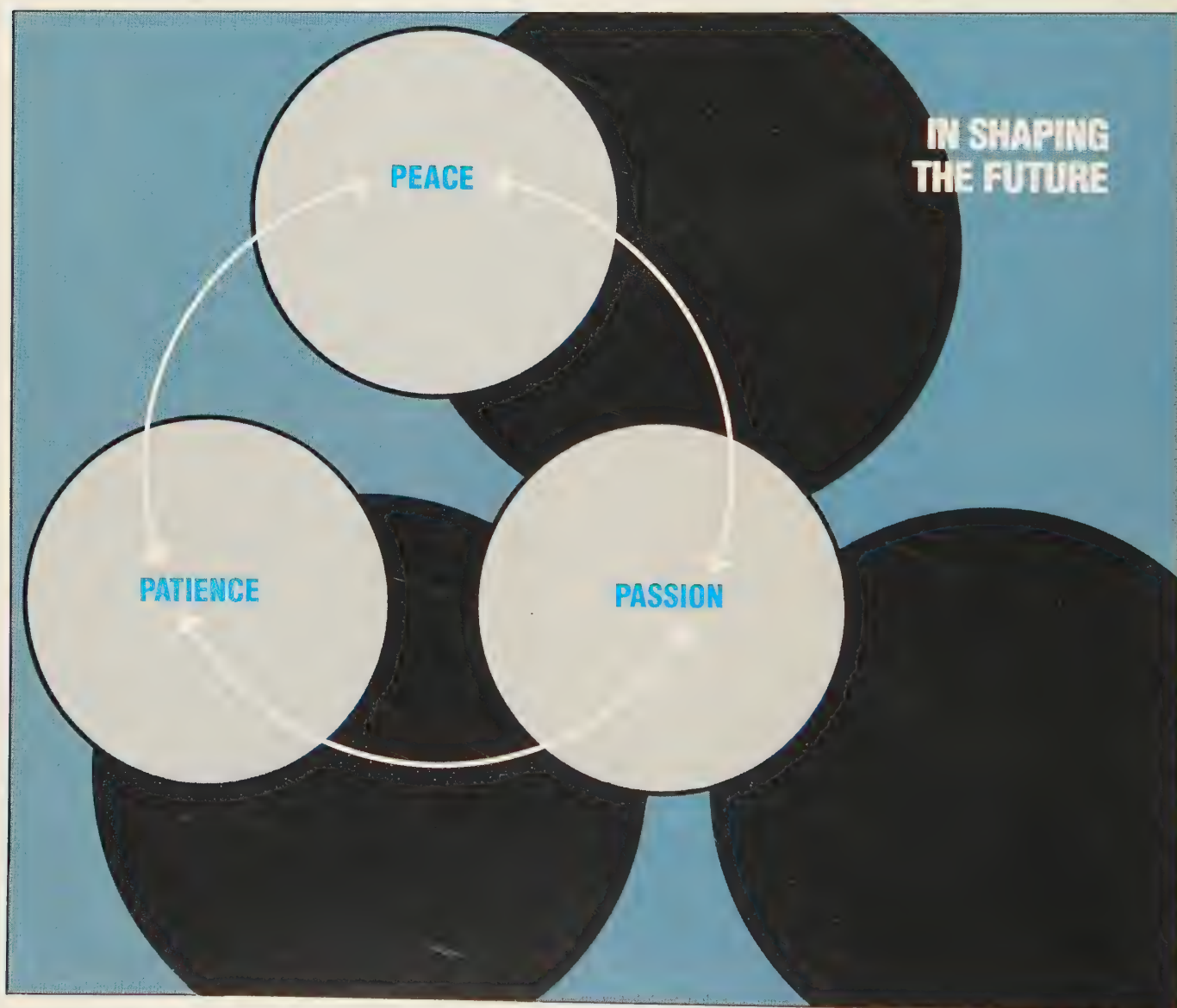
done or, at least, not done well. We shall shape our ministries *as religious* out of our identity as religious. Thus, we shall always be concerned with explicitly revealing the conscious faith dimension of all reality. This will be the focus of all our ministries, whatever forms of human service they might take. We shall not move away from human services, but we shall always reveal the faith meaning within them. More and more, we shall see our role as religious in terms of providing leadership that will animate the leadership of the laity and clergy in areas to which they are sent by their own vocations within the Church.

The changing times challenge our creativity as we search for new ways to minister to the new needs of our world in continuing the mission of Jesus to bring the Kingdom to be. Precisely because we must be creative we must discern the authenticity

of our choices as responses to the actual word of God. The immediate future is a time of creativity and discernment.

## CONCLUSION

The future is very challenging, even frightening. How are religious, called to authority or to responsibility for formation, to find the courage to live with the ambiguity of the signs of our times? How are they to find the courage to continue to discern how God calls us to shape the future? How are they to find the courage to be a challenging presence within our communities, assisting one another to shape the future in the Lord? I suggest that this courage can be found nowhere else but in deepened Paschal faith: in a continuous prayer that will convince us that the good news of Jesus Christ is so



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good that the Father brings new life out of mistakes and failures and absurdities—even of sin and death itself—new life, not in spite of these, but right out of them. Only this Paschal faith can give the courage to “hang in there” in the frustrating and painful process of authentic renewal and shaping the future in the Lord. It is this Paschal faith that enables Christians to be the only persons in the world who can hope against hope, who can go right on hoping in God, even when a situation is humanly hopeless.

It seems to me that perhaps the most important figure in our Bible, after Jesus, is Moses. God used this man, working through his strengths and weaknesses, to lead his people to the Promised Land. Historically, Moses was the human instrument without which the people would have never arrived there. Yet, Moses never put his own feet onto the Promised Land. Undoubtedly, he passionately desired to do so. Indeed, in the beginning it is likely that it was his belief that he, too, would personally enjoy the success of coming to the Promised Land that provided the necessary human motivation enabling him to pay the cost of leadership. Moses saw the Promised Land, the great goal—so beautiful, so wonderful—as, with arms outstretched, he prayed on the mountaintop for the people. Descending from his rapture in the Lord, he found this stiff-necked generation worshipping a golden calf. Over and over he would patiently begin again, as he continued to lead the people toward their rendezvous with God. But Moses himself did not reach it. Putting one foot before the other, leading the people, calling them, encouraging them, challenging them, confronting them, opening them to conversion, he finally fell into the ground and died.

Then, right out of this sacrifice of Moses, God brought the achievement of his goal. The people finally reached the Promised Land.

Religious called to leadership in any capacity at this time in history can learn much from contemplating Moses. To let go of personal desires and to enjoy and glory in truly renewed religious communities within a truly renewed Church—that is the goal to which we are called by the Lord through Vatican II. By overcoming the desire to make a personal arrival into these renewed communities an unconscious condition for paying the cost of leadership, and by patiently “hanging in there” in the process of renewal, without demanding an instant product, leaders may successfully respond to the call of God and put one foot in front of the other until they fall into the ground like a grain of wheat—knowing that out of this death, God will bring new life for the people, and that in his own time and in his own way He will bring them to true renewal.

The religious leader, through a life of deep prayer, must learn how to hold three profound operational attitudes in creative tension: peace, patience, and passion. He must be rooted in the deep peace that is the fruit of the profound Paschal faith that God will bring new life out of failure, pain, and crucifixion. Such peace will enable the patience required to “hang in there.” All the while, he must strive with all the passion of the heart to do whatever he can do, using all personal gifts and all material and institutional resources to shape the future in the Lord. The three attitudes must be held together; a person can be so peaceful and patient that he does nothing. He can be so passionate as to be turbulent and impatient and a source of tension and division, rather than a leader guiding people toward renewal in unity. With deep Paschal faith rooted in ongoing prayer, leaders will live out of peace, patience, and passion and will shape the future in the Lord.

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# CONTINUING PRIESTLY FORMATION

## Interview with Dominic Maruca, S. J.

**T**he editors of *Human Development* recently had an opportunity to interview Father Dominic Maruca while he was working on the staff of a priest-renewal team in Nairobi. Currently a professor in the Institute of Spirituality at the Gregorian University, Rome, Father Maruca has, in the past, spent ten years conducting workshops for the continuing theologic education of clergy throughout the United States, directed retreats for religious and priests on five continents, and presented updating programs for American military chaplains. He holds a doctoral degree in spiritual theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and has served as Master of Novices for the Maryland Province of the Society of Jesus.

**HD:** Father Maruca, what type of work were you doing before you moved to the Gregorian University this past year?

**Maruca:** Beginning in 1970, I worked with diocesan priests, primarily in workshops and retreats throughout the United States and also in South America, the Caribbean, Europe, and Asia. I've also worked with Jesuits, conducting workshops for

people preparing to give directed and personalized retreats, and with sisters in updating workshops.

**HD:** Which of these projects took most of your time?

**Maruca:** Helping diocesan priests to work out a spirituality that illuminates their lived ministry. I've done that in almost 80 different dioceses in the United States.

**HD:** How do you help them to work out such a spirituality?

**Maruca:** I was generally working with a team of priests who were trying to help other priests develop a new method or process that would enable them to perceive, interpret, and interact with life realistically and reverentially. That was the need that kept surfacing each time we met with a group of priests or their council to design a workshop. In the past, priests everywhere had been given a spirituality that was good, solid, comprehensive, coherent, and based on Scripture and tradition. This included a whole body of spiritual principles and practices they were assured would enable them to live a good Christian and priestly life for the rest of their days. But when they got out into active ministry, they found that the spirituality they had received usually proved inadequate.

**HD:** You found priests universally dissatisfied?

**Maruca:** I wouldn't say universally, but the trend was general. They didn't all express their dissatisfaction in the terms I just used, but they were definitely unhappy with what they had and were

searching for something new. They didn't always use the term spirituality; they just knew that they wanted to become more realistic than their previous spirituality had made them. Many felt that the principles or practices they had learned did not fit into following spiritual practices on one side and fulfilling ministerial obligations on the other. This was an interrupted kind of spirituality, and they were looking for something integrated. They wanted to find a way to take the major part of their day, which was spent at work in the pastoral care of others, and make it a part of their union with God, their spirituality.

**HD:** What else characterized their spirituality before you worked with them at renewal?

**Maruca:** Most of them had received what could be termed a "filling-station spirituality"—you tank up every morning. In prayer you established your union with God, then you went out to work hoping that you wouldn't run out of fuel before you got back to your *prie-dieu*. Many of the priests vaguely felt that there was something wrong with that pattern, but they didn't know how to validate their own experience, to reflect on it, and to discover whether other priests were feeling the same way. Many of them carried a feeling of guilt, thinking they were not living up to the obligations they had assumed as priests, particularly in regard to a life of prayer—an interior life, as many of them called it. They thought they ought to be spending more time in solitude, prayerfully united to God, meditating the truths from scripture, but, in a sense, dissociated from their actual ministry. Vatican II, in its decree on priestly life and ministry, had tried to overcome that dualism and, for the first time in any authoritative document, indicated that a priest's ministry should be the primary source of his sanctification. That was on the record, but it was not widely understood by priests; they had not found an opportunity to discuss its implications with other priests and resource persons who could encourage them, for example, to integrate their prayerful reflection on Scripture with their preparation of homilies.

**HD:** What was your goal in conducting the workshops?

**Maruca:** Our task was precisely to help each priest to see how his being a herald of the Word, that is, presiding at Eucharist, building up a Christian community, and working to serve humankind with all its basic human needs—the four functions mentioned at Vatican II and spelled out in the 1971 synod on the ministerial priesthood—could be realized in a very practical way in his life as a continuous source of sanctification.

**HD:** How did you go about setting up your workshops?

**Maruca:** Usually we met with the diocesan council of

priests, or a committee designated by the council, to try to ascertain what needs had surfaced among their presbytery. Generally, they would have taken a survey of some sort and come to an awareness of what their priests wanted and needed. Around 1970, they were expressing a need for clarification of the meaning of priesthood and the meaning of prayer and spirituality for priests. In later years they wanted to include other dimensions—for example, theologic updating of the meaning of revelation, ecclesiology, Christology, what was happening in moral theology, and the current understanding of the Eucharist. The list of topics we treated was almost endless, but we always focused on one central theme—how the specific issue was related to the priest's identity and how it could be integrated into his life. What I did, with the help of resource persons from different areas of specialization, was design a workshop to match their needs and desires, submit the plan to them, accept their modifications, then put together a team to present the workshop.

**HD:** What sort of format did you use?

**Maruca:** That depended on the size of the group. As you know, some dioceses are huge; in those, we would have a hundred or more priests attending every session. Other dioceses are comparatively small and we would have perhaps 20. The dynamics would differ, depending on the number actually present. Ideally, we tried to incorporate three elements while responding to the express needs of the priests. First, there would be some input, something from Scripture, tradition, or contemporary thought. Second, we always tried to provide some time for interiorization so that the person could enjoy a period of solitude in which he could reflect on the input in a prayerful way. Many complained that they had attended other programs and had heard a lot of recommendations, but when they returned home they became so immersed in their work that they didn't have a chance to assimilate what had been presented. Third, we tried to provide an opportunity for vigorous interaction among the priests, so that they could articulate what their own life experiences had been and what their own reflections were in relation to the input. Those were the ingredients of every workshop: input, interiorization, interaction.

**HD:** You mentioned their interest in several areas in theology, but you implied that their greatest need was for spirituality. When you use the term "spirituality," what precisely do you mean?

**Maruca:** I'd call it a never ending intrapersonal process that enables a person to perceive, interpret, and interact with all reality in a realistic and reverential way. This definition is quite different from the previous understanding of spirituality that identified it as a body of principles and practices. Many of the textbooks on spirituality presented, in

propositional form, the timeless truths of Christianity and encouraged observance of them.

**HD:** For example?

**Maruca:** That a person must be prayerfully united with God. That he must model his own life on the life of Jesus. When such principles were presented to seminarians they had no difficulty appreciating their truth; the problem was to find a way to integrate them into their lives. Was the prayerful union to be achieved apart from a man's ministry? Or was he supposed to be a contemplative in the midst of his activity? The same type of problem occurred with regard to practices, such as mortification and penance. The textbooks insisted that these should be an integral part of a person's spirituality; they had their basis in Scripture and tradition. But the books did not make clear just how mortification, penance, self-abnegation, and the like should actually fit into a priestly life. Our challenge was to help priests discover the actual opportunities in their lives that demanded the kinds of things that had already been presented abstractly to them. For example, if a man wants to deliver a homily that will really benefit his people, he will have to deny himself hours of watching television in order to prepare himself prayerfully and well, instead of just simply throwing together a few thoughts that occur to him Saturday night after the late show.

**HD:** What would be another example of the difference between the old and the new concepts of spirituality?

**Maruca:** Priests relating to women. Most of the men we worked with felt that in the seminary this issue was treated in a very negative way, and they were poorly equipped to deal well with women in their ministry. They felt the old spirituality called for distancing themselves from women and considering them as a danger to priesthood, celibacy, and perseverance. I'm not saying that was what was actually taught; it is what was perceived by seminarians, particularly in retrospect as priests. What we had to do was help these priests find a way to relate realistically and reverentially to women. They regretted that there had been no women around the seminary to help them develop an appreciative understanding of the ways in which women approach life and particularly of the role that the priest is to exercise in ministering to them.

**HD:** Are you saying that in the past spiritual formation consisted of a young man's introduction to a series of principles he was encouraged to adopt, whereas now it is his own lived experiences as a Catholic priest that should be the starting point for his spirituality?

**Maruca:** That's exactly what I'm saying. What we examined with priests in our workshops was their perception of reality. A man ought to be asking himself: What is the aperture of my mind, the horizon of my heart, as reality flows into them? Am I

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**The goal of our workshops was to help each priest see his role as herald of the Word realized in a practical way in his life.**

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filtering it through categories of thought that so constrict my life that much of it goes unperceived? Have I been conditioned to be unaware of most of the affective, or emotional, experiences going on within me? Do I systematically dissociate myself from such things because being incompatible with the ideal that was presented to me, they might possibly engender guilt?

**HD:** You would have the feelings but ignore them, and you see this as a defensive tactic.

**Maruca:** I believe it would be technically termed "repression with denial." This happens especially in the areas of anger and sexuality. Most priests found it difficult to accept these as part of a person's life. They programmed themselves to remain unaware of them rather than to deal with the anxiety, conflicts, or guilt they might engender.

**HD:** Working with such priests, how did you go about acquainting them with the fact that they were repressing and denying their feelings, that their experience of life was being narrowed?

**Maruca:** We utilized every possible means. The resource person on our team would be as honest as he could in talking about his own difficulties regarding defective or oppressive structures and the abuse of authority within the Church, as well as about his feelings of frustration, anger, and hostility in reaction to them. By speaking openly in a public forum, he was, in effect, encouraging the men to recognize that they had been living through experiences similar to his and that they had similar feelings. When they broke up into small groups and talked about

these emotions, they were able to accept them as appropriate and good, not something to be ashamed of. The same held true regarding sexuality. The resource person did not treat celibacy as a precious pearl or an abstraction but reviewed the history of celibacy in the Western Church, then very honestly shared some of his own struggles in trying to live up to this ideal and to integrate it into his whole human development. I didn't look for input people who simply had academic credentials; I wanted men on our team who, in their lifetimes, had had to grapple with something and could describe that struggle for the benefit of these priests.

**HD:** So you did, in fact, find that priests who heard others talking frankly about their emotional reactions found it possible to accept and discuss their own true feelings and experiences, even though these had been previously held under wraps?

**Maruca:** That's what happened. But we certainly weren't trying to foster what I would call "psychic streaking" in either the public forum or in small group conversations. I detected a fear of that kind of thing—of being manipulated into some kind of self-exposure that would cause them discomfort. We respected their sensitivities. Personally, I think there is a world of difference between psychic streaking and sharing the "secret of my heart," an expression Cardinal Newman used a hundred years ago. The secret of my heart is simply that I am human and I am walking through darkness illumined by faith—walking from clarity to clarity as God illumines me. That's what we talked about. We didn't try to create a situation involving the group dynamics of sensitivity sessions or encounter groups; nor did we use professionally trained facilitators. We had to explain very carefully what we hoped the small group discussions would accomplish, since many of the priests were anxious and fearful about what we were possibly coercing them into doing. Our whole idea was to provide a relaxed fraternal experience that they would want to continue subsequently in the form of small support-group sessions within their diocese or deanery.

**HD:** Your priests achieved a level of openness in their conversations that allowed them to talk frankly about their feelings, just as any group of professional persons might do. But how does spirituality come into such discussions?

**Maruca:** Toward the end of every session we encouraged the participants to reflect on what they had experienced during it. What they usually found was that by giving verbal articulation to their lived experience they became more comfortable with it. They were getting deeper insights into their own lives and becoming able to accept the reality they discovered within themselves. In effect, many were saying, "This is what I've been going through, and I didn't recognize it before." Often, at that point I

had a chance to encourage a man to make a directed or personalized retreat to further explore and deepen his insights.

**HD:** What was preventing these priests from getting these insights outside of the experiences you were providing?

**Maruca:** I would say that most priests have been overextended in activity. They have not arranged the opportunity, the leisure, to reflect upon their life experience so that they could monitor and evaluate it and decide whether to extend or curtail it in some way. Most felt overburdened with the demands being made on them. I should add that many were using their work as a wall to keep them from facing reality—for example, the charisms of sisters and the laity. Had they accepted these, they could have been relieved of a great deal of the burden they were carrying. Our bringing such men together and giving them a chance to talk about their life experiences enabled them to accomplish things that most would not have achieved in isolation. The practice of praying the breviary is a good example. Many priests, in solitude, probably lacerate themselves because they have not been faithfully fulfilling their obligation to give appropriate time and prayerful attention to the breviary. But when they talked about the matter with other priests and began to learn how others were dealing with this obligation, the ones who had stopped praying the office almost invariably began to pray as participants in either a morning or an evening session in which the breviary was prayed in common. They were not doing so out of a sense of obligation, but because they found that the practice was enabling them to experience God speaking to them, giving them a certain amount of peace and tranquility, as well as challenging them.

**HD:** What made the difference—talking together about the breviary or reciting it together?

**Maruca:** Both of these. Hearing other priests say that they did not go about praying the office in a scrupulous way and that they could omit parts of the office for good reasons without feeling guilty helped many to develop a more realistic attitude. Praying together, with personal spiritual profit, made them more reverential toward the practice. Being involved in a corporate experience with brother priests helps men to sense that they are not called to serve God's people in isolation and that the responsibility is shared with others. Our workshops helped promote a beautiful awareness among priests that they are not alone. I think many have experienced discouragement and depression precisely because they do not see themselves as part of a fraternity, with all members dedicated to working very, very gradually toward a coming of the Kingdom. I would say that the majority of priests had been given a spirituality that entailed rugged individualism. They were taught to fulfill

their spiritual obligations with the expectation that doing so would virtually guarantee their perseverance and private salvation. We worked hard to help priests discover the great strength and support that could be theirs if they would relate to their brother priests and bishop in a truly fraternal way. But they had to act their way into this. The old saying is true: people more frequently act their way into a new way of thinking rather than think their way into a new way of acting. So by bringing these men together and providing an opportunity for them to experience their unity, we were helping them develop a desire to perpetuate their sharing of life and work beyond the workshops. Interestingly, at the same time, we were successful in helping increasing numbers of priests discover their need to turn inward and, with the help of a fellow pilgrim in an individually directed retreat, deepen the convictions that were taking shape as a result of the corporate experience they had shared.

**HD:** Did you go back to the 80 dioceses to follow up with a second or third program? Or did you leave them on their own to do so?

**Maruca:** I went back to some dioceses, such as Bloomington, Indiana, and Greensboro, North Carolina, where we had a series of workshops. In Philadelphia I put together a new team each year for six consecutive years, with a different theme each time; as a result, a deepening sense of priestly identity evolved. All the priests of the archdiocese returned each year—all 900, in groups of 100 to 150 during the first week of each month, and not on a voluntary basis. The cardinal, the auxiliary bishops, and all the priests were present year after year. It fostered their sense of unity enormously.

**HD:** Was the cardinal responsible for making it mandatory?

**Maruca:** No, the priests' council decided it should be, and the cardinal archbishop supported them in their decision. Initially it was a struggle to interest the priests in coming and entering into the process, but at the end of the programs the vast majority expressed gratitude to the council for having put pressure on them to participate. In other dioceses, where attendance was voluntary, we found that those present were the ones already reading, attending lectures, and seizing other opportunities to enhance their professional competence. Those who needed our programs most were usually the ones who stayed away. So I personally feel that there is a value in workshops of this kind being made obligatory. I think the Camden, New Jersey, diocese has an excellent idea; they offer six programs during the year. One might be in Scripture, one in moral theology, another in counseling and spiritual direction; the priests are given the option to attend any one of these. Then each succeeding year they can choose a new topic, depending on what their needs are at the time.

**HD:** You said you returned five times to Philadelphia. How many of the 80 dioceses in which you worked had just one program and no follow-up?

**Maruca:** Many of them used the excellent programs provided by Father Vincent Dwyer and Father Frank Bonano as follow-up. But I try to get persons within a diocese to take responsibility for arranging further programs, using local resource people rather than relying on out-of-town talent. Too often a diocese does not recognize its own resource persons, so I frequently tried to integrate such individuals into our program, hoping they would be appreciated as potentially helpful. I don't know precisely how many dioceses have regular updating programs; my impression is that there is great diversity among regions in this regard. You could get the exact figures, I'm sure, from the headquarters of the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy.

**HD:** When you went back to some dioceses year after year, did you see any obvious change in the priests?

**Maruca:** They, themselves, gave testimony about the actual changes. They said that when they first came together they had to wear name tags; they didn't really know one another and did not feel comfortable with one another. As the years passed, they gradually found themselves more at ease with their brother priests, even when they were in occasional disagreement among themselves. Eventually the older men grew to respect the obvious zeal and good will of the younger ones, who in turn began to recognize the wisdom acquired through experience by those who were older. The laity recognized that something was happening to their priests, both in the quality of their ministry and in the affability with which they were dealing with one another.

**HD:** Did you ever involve lay persons in your programs for priests?

**Maruca:** I certainly did. One program, for example, was focused on the meaning of permanent commitment. We compared priesthood, marriage, and religious life, and brought in four married couples, four divorced persons, and five widows and widowers to help us do this. We also had a panel of youngsters. They all told us how clearly they saw their priests changing. After one workshop, a religious sister said to me, "I don't know what you did, but for the first time the pastor came over and asked us if we needed anything, and whether he could offer Mass for us in the convent, which he had never done. He was very gracious." That was a result of a session in which the priests discussed the tremendous contribution sisters had been making over the years to the vitality of the Church and how unappreciated this gift had too often remained. When we first brought some sisters into our programs, many priests were defensive and ill at ease. However, when they actually heard sisters discussing

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their ministry and their aspirations, the priests gradually began to realize that they were observing a sign of the times, and that the Holy Spirit was moving the sisters into new directions.

Whenever I introduced sisters into the programs as resource persons, the experience proved to be very positive for the priests. For example, I brought in one sister who has a doctorate in psychology and is chairperson of a college psychology department, and she discussed with the priests questions about prayer, loneliness, depression, friendship, and the like. The men felt tremendously enriched by the insights she precipitated as a result of her honesty, forthrightness, and skillful observations. The more exposure priests have to such women with ideas, experience, and willingness to share them, the less defensive they will be.

**HD:** Looking at the world of priests right now, and particularly in the United States, what would you say remains to be done?

**Maruca:** Every priest needs to realize that his professional updating is an unending process, and that he must integrate an adequate amount of time for reading, reflection, and discussion with others into the core of his life. Many priests acknowledge that when they finished their seminary training they believed they had all the tools they would need to carry out their ministry. They felt disconcerted, later, as a result of the culture shock that accompanied the post-Vatican II Church. I think more and more priests are now recognizing that what they demand of their physicians, dentists, and lawyers—all the people who minister to them

professionally—ought to be equally demanded of themselves.

**HD:** Doctors, dentists, and lawyers have professional journals that they can read regularly and feel certain they are being brought up to date. Do priests know what they ought to be reading?

**Maruca:** My perception of priestly training, particularly during the past 15 or 20 years, is that it has become so diversified—unlike, for example, medical or legal training—that the needs of individual priests differ widely. Many need a proper understanding and appreciation of Scripture; others lack a solid foundation in systematic theology. So I find it extremely difficult to suggest a bibliography that could satisfy an entire presbyterate. Ideally, the diocesan council of priests, with its own committee in charge of updating, would be able to alert priests to new publications that could be helpful in view of their needs. But, I would say *Theological Studies* and *Chicago Studies* are two excellent professional journals. The surveys in moral theology in the first of these, I would say, are an indispensable aid for anyone trying to serve people pastorally. *Emmanuel* and *The Priest* are making courageous efforts to meet priests where they are and to provide material to keep them updated.

**HD:** Do you find priests reading more these days?

**Maruca:** My impression is that they are trying to read more, but many are frustrated because of the confusion they experience in attempting to harmonize the ideas they encounter in what are acclaimed to be the best books coming out—say by Küng, Schillebeeckx, and Rahner. For years I have recommended the works of Avery Dulles because of his marvelous sense of reverence for the past, continuity with it, and courageous, confronting vision of the future. His *Models of the Church*, for example, and his *Survival of Dogma*, and very recently his articles in *Theological Studies* on models of revelation are all extremely helpful reminders that there are many ways of perceiving the mystery of how God reveals himself to us and calls for a response in faith, just as there are many ways of understanding the mystery of the Church, not merely as institution but also as mystical communion, sacrament, herald of the Word, and servant of mankind. Priests need to be invited and challenged to read the books that they can comprehend and, theologically, to move beyond where they are.

**HD:** And you implied earlier that discussion with others adds something that reflection in isolation cannot provide.

**Maruca:** That's right. I've just mentioned some theologic writings, but there are others, such as those by developmental psychologists, that can be extremely helpful. In many of our programs for priests we have had an opportunity to integrate the disciplined observations of psychologists Abraham

Maslow, Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg, and Jim Fowler, and this added a whole new horizon to the priests' self-understanding and their awareness of how to be effective ministers. For example, to deal adequately with guilt and contrition, I think priests have to be helped to recognize the human underpinnings of the growth process. They know that grace builds upon nature, but many don't appreciate specifically what this process involves or the patience and understanding that are needed to help persons go through the various stages of their development.

**HD:** Are you saying that people have to learn a lot about human nature before they are able to develop a realistic spirituality?

**Maruca:** I'm saying that the two are inseparable. The supernatural is not something extrinsically superimposed upon the natural, but something that totally permeates and transforms it. Spirituality cannot be conceived of as a process that prescinds from the dynamics of natural development. The more a priest becomes aware of what behavioral scientists have researched and contributed, the more comfortable he can become with his own existence. He is relieved of a lot of misplaced guilt, morbid guilt, and is helped to experience healthy contrition for his own failures in the past.

**HD:** In the process of renewal of priests you have emphasized the importance of the individual person's looking deeply into his own life, his own reactions to circumstances in which he has been living and working, and his coming to accept himself more realistically. It sounds as if renewal is accomplished by holding up a magnifying glass and gazing at oneself. Are there some priests who call this approach too self-centered, who say that what priests really need is encouragement to go out and do more work for people—to intensify their pastoral efforts?

**Maruca:** Yes, occasionally I do run into priests who unfortunately see renewal as an either/or dilemma: either you are concerned about yourself or you are facing such issues as social justice. I myself think that the more responsible position is to recognize that the person who is most deeply in touch with his own needs, hopes, and fears is the one best equipped to work socially for others. Self-knowledge, in other words, can help us to understand and to respond effectively to others, just as a compassionate understanding of the condition of others will be helpful to us in comprehending and accepting ourselves.

**HD:** Do you think priests today are finding life more difficult than priests did 20 years ago?

**Maruca:** I can only witness my own experience, and I have been finding my own life much simpler and easier than it was 20 years ago, in virtue of what I've been saying about the real meaning of spiritu-

ality. At one point in my life I was constantly reaching out toward an ideal that was so far above me that I would fall far short, whether it was in respect to my own interior life or outreach to others. The result was a feeling of inadequacy, discouragement, and depression. But now I'm much more realistic in the appraisal of who I am, what my assets and liabilities are, and how God and other persons view them. As a result I'm much more comfortable.

You are familiar, I'm sure, with Pope John XXIII's saying, "I observe every single detail, disregard a greater number of things, and improve some things a little bit." I think that more and more priests are becoming realistic about life in that way, and much more comfortable with their own limitations. They realize the complexity and richness of the understanding of humanity we have from theology, psychology, sociology, and anthropology and are doing so with greater peace and tranquility. They are now at a point at which they see that God is asking them to exercise a very limited role. They are not being held responsible for alleviating all the world's pain and anguish; their lives have value and they can be happy living them, even if they are not capable of changing the world singlehandedly.

**HD:** Do you expect to see a greater number of young men pursuing a career in the priesthood in the future?

**Maruca:** I wouldn't expect that numerically there will be more. I think young men being attracted to the priesthood are more realistic about it than I was 35 years ago.

**HD:** Realistic about what?

**Maruca:** The very things we've been talking about. Seminarians today have seen what has happened in the Church and within the priesthood during the last decade or so. I think this engenders a healthy awareness of their need for one another. They are much more in tune with the human dynamics in themselves and in others. I think, too, they are aware of other resources, particularly in the gifts of the laity. They don't look upon themselves as a cast apart but recognize that they are within the believing community and are ready to accept caring from others as well as to care for others and their needs.

**HD:** Are you aware of changes taking place in the programs for seminarians to make their spirituality a more integral part of their lives?

**Maruca:** The bishops of the United States asked a group of us to put together a booklet that reflected on our experience with priests from 1970 to 1972. This came out in 1973 under the title *The Spiritual Renewal of American Priesthood*. I understand that it is now being used widely in seminaries to help young men develop a realistic spirituality in terms of their surrounding American culture, their inter-

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**“I observe every single detail, disregard a great number of things, and improve some things a little bit.”**

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personal relationships with superiors and other persons, and their prayerfulness as an integral part of a person's whole life. I know that many spiritual directors in seminaries are currently unhappy with the programs that are being offered, and they are trying to improve them.

**HD:** Has that booklet been updated since 1973?

**Maruca:** It was written by Father Ernie Larkin and Father Jerry Broccolo as a reflection on lived priestly experience. (It sold 150,000 copies, and since there are less than 60,000 priests in the United States, this is extraordinary.) It met a real need among priests, even though it was not a perfect piece of work and was intended principally as an instrument to encourage priests to gather and discuss their living experiences. A follow-up, titled *As One Who Serves*, was published by the U.S. Catholic Conference a few years ago, but it has not met with the same success as the initial publication. I am not sure why this was so, except that it begins with a theory about what a priest is and then spells out the consequences. Our earlier methodology was to start with the actual experience of priests and then encourage people to ask crucial questions.

**HD:** Have you found any notable difference between the spirituality of diocesan and religious priests?

**Maruca:** I think that at one time it was customary to accentuate the differences between them, just as between priests and laity. My perception of what has been happening recently (and I think it is a

marvelous development) is that there is emphasis on what we all share in common as laity, religious, and priests. There is a common Christian spirituality that is specified by the call we have all received to be caring persons. Married people are called to care for their spouse and children, and they are sanctified in the actual caring in the midst of the demands made upon them. The single person devoted to a career or profession is sanctified through the process of caring for a parent, clients, or other neighbors with dedication and self-sacrifice. The same is true for religious and priests. Every one of us is called to share with others the gifts that have been bestowed upon us. This would be Erik Erikson's seventh stage in the life cycle. For our lives to be generative, we must transcend ourselves; we must be willing to expend all our time, energies, and talents in caring for others.

Many years ago Father DeGuibert, who was considered by many to be the best ascetic-mystical theologian of our century, stated that the only thing that really distinguishes the diocesan priest from the religious is the point of application of his caring. He saw the diocesan priest as sanctified through his immediate availability to his people, since he is literally consumed in his service to their day-to-day needs. DeGuibert's corresponding observation about religious priests is that they are, through their vow of obedience, sanctified by their willingness not to remain in a specific geographic place but to travel wherever God, through their superiors, missions them to go. Both kinds of priests are exercising faith and open love; what distinguishes them is the fact that one is localized and the other is universalized. DeGuibert suggests that there should be no question raised as to which is superior, and he makes a strong point that you should never direct a person toward a seminary or a novitiate merely because you detect a need for manpower. God's diversity of gifts must be respected. He desires some men to be sanctified by immediately immersing themselves in pastoral care, and others, such as writers or teachers, to develop their holiness through a ministry conducted from a different perspective and at a different range. I find some diocesan priests who are as poor, if not poorer, than religious priests, and whose life of obedience is often more difficult and painful than that of their religious counterparts. I personally think that the more interdependence there is between diocesan and religious priests the better. Religious priests can be kept realistic by their contact with diocesan priests who are totally immersed in pastoral ministry. I think diocesan priests are helped when they recognize what it is that religious are trying to do in their efforts to pioneer certain ventures, whether on foreign missions or within the boundaries of a diocese. I see practically no signs of competitiveness or resentment any longer; today there is a great deal of mutual respect and admiration.

**HD:** Do you think that in a way the two groups are moving in separate directions? For example, when you said you had conducted numerous updating workshops for diocesan priests, I didn't hear you say that any religious priests had attended.

**Maruca:** I should have added that in all our programs for diocesan priests, religious priests working in those dioceses, especially pastorally or parochially, were invited and encouraged to participate, and many did so. Many religious priests are serving in a number of dioceses, and many of these men attended our workshops and contributed greatly to their success. For example, the Benedictines in the Greensboro diocese certainly enhanced the quality of our prayerfulness when we all recited the Divine Office during our program there.

**HD:** How does seminary formation work appear to you today?

**Maruca:** I think people doing formation work with seminarians have a greater challenge than I had 15 years ago when I was a master of novices working with young Jesuits. We had large groups at that time and there was a certain homogeneity, even though we noted the early signs of diversification blossoming. By and large we still had a group of men whose backgrounds were similar and whose visions were similar, so it was relatively easy for my associates and me to meet what we thought were the needs of these people. I think that since that time there has been an increasing challenge to spiritual directors to work in a much more personalized and individualized way. I don't mean to say that we were impersonal, but we were able to do many things through conferences and group instruction that would be handled in a one-on-one fashion today. Unlike now, most of our men came from Catholic and intact families; there were many things about their backgrounds and beliefs that we could presume. Today's seminarians call for much more patience and time and a willingness to work individually with each person to find out where he is, developmentally speaking, and to call him forward in a gracious, unhurried way.

I think that at one time it was felt that anyone could be a spiritual director in a seminary if he lived a life of spiritual and moral integrity. Today there is widespread recognition of the fact that the man who will succeed in this task will have to possess an extraordinary combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other gifts from God in order to win the respect of the young men and establish himself as the friend they trust and admire.

**HD:** It sounds like a special vocation within a vocation.

**Maruca:** It's like being a "servant to the servants of God." To do formation or spiritual direction work for seminarians, a man must be willing to forego the gratification of being out on the front lines and ministering to many different people with many

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urgent needs. The seminary calls for a relatively constricted life and one that is as hidden as Nazareth, but there is no more important work, I'm sure, than this one that involves giving shape to the character, convictions, heart, and vision of the Church's future ordained leaders.

**HD:** Are there programs, institutions, or curricula available today to prepare priests to adequately fulfill this special mission?

**Maruca:** During this past year, the informative bulletin *Crux* has devoted several issues to evaluating various programs and centers around the United States and abroad that prepare people to serve as spiritual directors. To sum up what they have been saying, there are differing programs that meet different persons' needs, so each individual has to ascertain what his specific needs are. For example, am I called to function as a psychologic counselor as well as a spiritual director? Do I need intense and prolonged supervision of my spiritual direction preparation? Am I interested in psychology as an underpinning for my spiritual counseling? Do I need a rich background in the history as well as theory of spirituality? The exact answers to such questions will suggest contacting such experienced and talented program directors as Father Luigi Rulla at the Gregorian University's Institute of Psychology in Rome, Father Paul V. Robb at the Institute of Spiritual Leadership in Chicago, Father William Connolly at the Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, or Father Adrian Van Kaam at the Institute of Formative Spirituality in

Pittsburg. There is also a very fine summer program in applied spirituality, designed by Father Albert Zabala, at the University of San Francisco. The National Office for Continuing Education of the Clergy has also made available appraisals of the different programs that could be helpful to those going into seminary formation or spiritual direction work.

**HD:** You have dealt with a lot of people who are doing spiritual direction, and you do a good deal of it yourself. What would be the minimal background in the behavioral sciences that you would expect a person to have before taking on the task of directing souls?

**Maruca:** I would say that the more conversant a person is with psychology and sociology, the better equipped he is. And I think that to plunge into this work without any awareness of the normal dynamics of human development and group dynamics would be to risk instilling an unrealistic or insensitive kind of spirituality in the directees. But it's difficult to appraise a person's credentials because a spiritual director's greatest asset is his reflective awareness of the pilgrimage upon which God has called him. The more closely he is in touch with the way God has been dealing with him and the complexity of his response to God, the more understanding, compassionate, and supportive will he be to those he is directing. I think this is why St. Ignatius wanted a spiritual director to go through the actual experience of the *Spiritual Exercises* before trying to direct anyone else through them. A person can be unrealistically idealistic in what he expects or demands of someone else if he, himself, has never stumbled and fallen, and struggled to rise again.

**HD:** We've been talking about priests as spiritual

directors of seminarians; do you see women having a role in this ministry?

**Maruca:** I certainly do. I believe that women—and I don't mean to stereotype them—have a gift to be able to do what I have described: to care, to call forth, and to nurture the growth process. We should find a way to give our directees an opportunity to benefit from the combined gifts and experiences of both male and female directors. Perhaps some type of group direction would be the best forum in which this could be provided.

**HD:** Do you foresee a day when people seeking spiritual direction will feel entitled to expect that their spiritual directors possess some sort of credentials?

**Maruca:** I think that if we demand professional competence on the part of faculty members in the areas of Scripture, and systematic and moral theology, we ought to demand equal professional competence from those whose ministry involves an integration of these. Many priests who have moved out into ministry after ordination have discovered that their greatest need was precisely in the area of integrating the different aspects of their own lives. They deserved help to accomplish this during their training, and that help should have been provided by directors trained to be extremely competent. I think seminarians, priests, sisters, brothers, and other leaders in the Church should be directed by persons who have both scientific knowledge and artistic skills in the area of spirituality, but I doubt that they will uniformly receive this type of care until some sort of licensing process is established, as it has been for doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. I always hesitate a little, though, when I talk this way. You see, I'm never quite sure whether the Curé d'Ars, probably one of the best of all spiritual directors, would have gotten past the kind of examining board we are talking about.

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# The Spiritual Direction Relationship

MADELINE BIRMINGHAM, r.c.

A woman may seek spiritual direction because she has reached a particular goal in life; she has achieved success. She is in charge of a large community of women who admire and respect her. In addition to being competent, she has the ability to help people around her feel secure and free. Yet she finds her own life flat and her prayer nonexistent. She feels like a hypocrite and wonders what to do.

A man may seek spiritual guidance because he feels he is no longer on top of his game. His life has somehow deteriorated. He is no longer clear about his goals, about what he wants from life. He was a relatively happy person but now finds that he is often confused and sometimes resentful. He wants to know where God is, what has become of Him. His whole life has been wrapped around his family and friends. His work absorbed him and made him feel useful and needed. Now none of this seems to matter. He describes himself as always having been a good Christian, but where is the hundredfold that God promised? Why has happiness and contentment been taken away from him? Could spiritual direction help?

Still others might search out spiritual direction because "there is nothing wrong." Their jobs are going well and so are their prayers. And yet they can't understand the nagging thought that there ought to be something more, and they find themselves reluctant to look at that disturbing idea. Could a spiritual director help?

Some people think about direction even though they have a deep and stable relationship with God. God is real and is experienced as a God who responds in life and prayer. Such people are looking for someone who will simply listen and help them to clarify God's action in their lives. They recognize the constant possibility of greater growth. They would welcome the companionship of a fellow traveler, someone willing to walk with them as they continue to be with the Lord.

We can easily see that people have many reasons for searching out a director. They are feeling impelled or pushed, threatened or anxious; they have different kinds of forebodings. They often don't like that movement within themselves that forces them to look for help outside their own resources. And the questions arise: What kind of help do I want and what kind is going to be available to me? Or to put it another way: Who is the person I will try to

seek out and just what kind of person will that be?

Oftentimes a person makes a directed retreat, finds the direction helpful, and continues with the same director. In such cases, the above questions may never be asked. Once in a while, following a recommendation given by a friend or some other resource, the seeker will telephone a director who is willing to consider the possibility of direction. If the director is wise and the prospective directee is cautious, they will meet at least once before beginning direction. This affords both of them an opportunity to talk together about the needs of the directee and how the director views spiritual direction. They give themselves the chance to sound each other out and to see if they can work well together.

By and large, however, despite a seeming abundance of trained spiritual directors, one is not easily found. When a person begins the search, it can seem, and indeed is, often endless. It appears that expecting to find good directors easily is a myth. And a director must be found before the directee is able to ask the right questions.

Certainly the number of telephone calls we receive at the Center for Religious Development in Cambridge, Massachusetts, indicates scarcity—not supply. Some callers tell us they have been searching for a couple of years. We have made it a practice to welcome and to interview prospective candidates for spiritual direction. It is important to find out if they really want and will profit by direction. They may benefit more from counseling, therapy, or helpful information. There are many ways to respond to the multitude of human needs and desires. We believe it is a basic part of our service to help people determine just what those needs are.

What is equally critical during such an interview is to listen carefully to the person's response to the simple question: What kind of person do you want as a director? Several years ago many people almost automatically asked for a man, preferably a priest. His qualities and abilities as a spiritual director were taken for granted. This role was considered to be the priest's or minister's area of expertise. Nowadays people are seldom concerned about the sex of the person or the role that person may

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occupy in the Church. Instead, what we hear is a desire to work with someone who is mature, experienced, warm, and responsive.

Different people express their desires and needs in different ways, but statements such as the following are typical:

"Please don't recommend someone who will give me the pipe-smoking, nodding routine."

"I'd like someone who will be a 'real' person; someone who will respond and share with me, who will be supportive and encouraging."

"I'd like someone who will challenge me when I need a shove or a push in the right direction—when I'm ready for it."

"Is there someone who can help me to talk about God and prayer? I find it hard to do."

People look less and less frequently for another who will solve their problems, who will literally "tell me what to do." More and more people recognize the need to solve their own problems. They need to answer their own questions if the solutions are to be valid and growth provoking. Fewer people are looking for spiritual direction as a time to be instructed about God, the Church, morality, and sin. They are not searching for a person with greater knowledge, who will fill them with good ideas that somehow make them feel better. Instead, many of the people who come to our center are looking for someone who is willing to become engaged in their lives and in their struggle to find or encounter God. They may not know exactly how to express their desires, hopes, fears, and dreams. They do know, even when they cannot articulate it clearly, that a real person sitting with and listening to them will enable them to find out whatever it is they need to discover.

One word is the touchstone of this kind of relationship: trust. Trust between the two people ordinarily comes slowly, at times painfully. It is never an easy process for a person to reach inside, to look around at what is going on at the core of her being, to begin to speak out of her deepest self. There needs to be a time of testing. The directee often asks questions about the director; she needs to know what makes the director tick. The director who fails to understand this may become impatient with the process. After all, she may reason, is the seeker here to find out about God or about me? The director may become unduly defensive or begin to push the person toward talking about God and prayer before the directee is ready to confide, to trust, to take a step that can be felt as risky and filled with personal peril.

Implicit in this testing period is the need for the director to "hear" the basic underlying questions in the beginning stages of direction: Will you stay with me? Will you listen patiently to my fumbling attempts to tell you who I am when often I don't know the answer? Will you accept my telling you that although I am a Christian, possibly a religious, I find it impossible to pray? I don't seem to know

how. I'm not sure who God is in my life. I don't even know if He's around. And I find little evidence to show that God has much interest in me as a person.

As the director listens, can she be patient with the process? Can she let the other begin to trust, to taste the freedom of being listened to seriously and accepted humanly? Such trust comes slowly and over a period of time. It may be helpful to convey to the directee that his entire being need not be revealed in one wrenching session. This doesn't have to happen at the first or even the tenth visit.

The directee's image, idea, or ideal of God may be limited. If the sense of God is immature, fearful, or anxious, this will assert itself in the relationship with the spiritual director. Such an attitude goes deep. Defenses against this image of God have been developing since early childhood. The defenses will begin to drop only if the directee feels that "I can tell this person everything about myself. Maybe I could begin to tell God a few things too."

During this period, too much stress cannot be placed on the need for the director to be receptive, attentive, and patient. The directee should be drawn out in a nonthreatening way.

Above all, if the director wants to help another encounter the real God, she must be honest in the relationship. Perhaps one of the most difficult lessons to be learned by the spiritual director is that she is not playing a role or fulfilling a function. Certainly there are good and bad ways of responding, of drawing out, of helping the other to become clearer and more concrete about what's going on. But the danger to be avoided at all costs is using methods or techniques in place of a genuine relationship. Asking the right kinds of questions will never be enough. When someone is asking a director to stay with him, the only meaningful and true response is to be a real person. This can sound simplistic, yet it has deep significance. It demands a special kind of involvement with the directee.

How do we name this involvement, this engagement? No word has been adequately coined to define the relationship between director and directee. Some call it a friendship. And a friendship can develop that is deep and lasting. There can be serious sharing on both sides as well as the opportunity for some relaxation and socializing. While this may occasionally take place, it does not seem to be the focus of spiritual direction. Spiritual direction can encompass friendship at times, but friendship itself is never the central theme.

The relationship between the two people remains unique because the focus is on what happens between the directee and God. The director plays an important role and takes a particular place, one that is not ordinarily given to others. To look carefully and clearly at the uniqueness of the relationship requires only that we answer a simple question: To how many people other than my director have I revealed all that I know and discover about myself? We may have told a few close friends about

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## **The hallmark of the director/directee relationship will always be the person's continuing struggle to pray.**

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the bits and pieces of our experiences. We have related some of what goes on in our lives with God. And we have revealed to others the marks or scars of our early youth. But is there anyone other than the director who has received all or most of these inner experiences in such detail? As the spiritual direction evolves, the director becomes the repository of all that happens in a person's life: his problems, his joys, his difficulties in prayer, and his growing ability to be with the Lord. It is the director and directee together who see God's action as He continually shows Himself in the person's life, relationships, and prayer. Is it ever possible to share such intimacy with another if that other is not a person in whom trust can be placed?

This relationship with the director demands an intense sharing of another's joy, enthusiasm, and desire. It also demands an intense sharing of the other's pain, sorrow, anger, and feelings of helplessness. The director must be convinced that God is working through and in this intensity of feeling if she is to remain with the person in a nonjudgmental and receptive way. It is the director who can sometimes become the object of anger. She cannot allow herself to be dismayed, frustrated, or thwarted by those feelings. She must accept and use them to help the directee see what is happening. If she is able to do this, then the directee can begin to experiment, though timidly, with expressing all his feelings, including anger, to God.

The hallmark of the relationship will always be the person's continuing struggle to pray. A director may stay with another for a fairly long period of seemingly unproductive time. She can do this by recognizing that her ability to be with the directee

can eventually free the latter to begin serious prayer.

Thus far we have spoken about the director's ability to remain with the directee, encouraging and supporting. We have also spoken of the director's ability to allow the directee to express feelings, both positive and negative. These abilities have to be seen in the context of movement toward God in prayer. As the level of trust develops, the director must also begin to ask hard questions of herself and the directee if this seems necessary.

For example, if the time spent together has taken on an abiding atmosphere of sharing problems, counseling, or advising, the director must begin to ask what is happening in the prayer of this person? Is he really struggling with the Lord? Is he becoming more open, more transparent in telling the Lord how he is feeling? Is he approaching God as He is rather than how he thinks He ought to be? Is he letting God be real? Is he allowing God the freedom to respond as He may want to respond? Too often we put God in a box by relating to Him in only one way. For example, we see Him as judge, lawgiver, stern taskmaster. We see Him as loving, kind, tender, and caring but never allow Him to show Himself as demanding or forceful. If the directee is not praying, not becoming more real and letting God be more real, there is something amiss in the spiritual direction. No matter how difficult the director and directee find this interchange, they must look at what is or is not happening.

There may even come a time when the director is forced to remind the directee that there can be no spiritual direction if there is no serious attempt to pray. The director can do this only when she is sure that God is the focus of the relationship. The relationship of the two persons involved does make a difference, an important difference. But it is not the focal point. If their own relationship is primary, if friendship has developed ahead of or in place of engagement with God, objectivity becomes difficult. When the directee is more concerned about the reactions and responses of the director than he is with God, something is wrong. The same is true of the director. If she finds herself caring more about comforting the directee than about helping him confront God, she has lost her objectivity. She must engage God, asking Him for help in regaining a better perspective.

There is a delicate balance to be maintained. The relationship should be real. It must be supportive, encouraging, and comforting. It must also retain objectivity and challenge. If the director wants the directee's primary concern to be God, she will not hesitate to challenge, even though doing so can be painful. And if the directee is serious about his stated desires, he too will find the challenge as necessary as the comfort. Thus, the relationship grows honestly. Both recognize why they are there. They are there to discover God, and they will not slight that relationship easily.

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONS

JAMES J. GILL, S.J., M.D.

**F**or years I have wanted to conduct a seminar that has never materialized only because of a lack of initiative on my own part. It would be given for people who work on the campus of a Catholic college or university, and its outcome would probably be the same regardless of where it might be held. The participants would not be the students, although ultimately they would be the principal beneficiaries. But all the rest of the people involved in the institution's life and work would be represented: administrators, faculty members, team coaches, drama directors, counselors, librarians, religious sisters and brothers, clergy, health services staff, maintenance personnel, campus security people, dormitory prefects, those who serve meals, and bookstore clerks. All of these in some way make frequent contact with the lives of the young women and men who are being educated, and every one is in a position to make a unique contribution to the human, Christian development of these students.

The purpose of the seminar would be to help these adults explore the ways in which they can personally foster the character development of students. For example, just as team coaches are able to cultivate certain qualities in their athletes, the acquisition of other sets of personality attributes can

be encouraged by those in charge of publishing the campus newspaper, directing school plays, or providing students with financial aid. I believe that all those who touch the lives of young people can from time to time, and sometimes in very profound ways, serve as models and challengers to facilitate the personal development of those young people. At present, however, countless opportunities are being lost because there is no campus-wide understanding of what the developing, truly Christian adolescent or young adult should look like; what special contributions each adult employed on campus could make by nurturing specific qualities of character in the students; how these growth-assists can be best offered; how the various development-facilitating efforts could be coordinated; and how these adults could be sensitized to the students' needs for constructive interaction with them if they are to achieve a well-rounded maturing of their personalities.

I perceive office secretaries, in the way they deal with individual students, as able to teach them what true courtesy and respect for people mean. Campus police are often in a position to demonstrate how authority can be exercised in a kindly and considerate manner. Coaches can help students learn to be courageous when victory seems nearly

One of the benefits of this type of seminar would be to force the adults on campus to face such issues as the specific developmental phases or growth tasks that adolescents and young adults must accomplish during their undergraduate and graduate school years, and how each adult's effectiveness at fostering the growth can be maximized. The seminar participants could meet at various times during the academic year to evaluate their own attempts and to assist one another to become more successful in accomplishing their aims. If such seminars could be conducted in several educational institutions simultaneously, results could be compared and insights and useful strategies exchanged.

### VEHICLE FOR EXCHANGE

Why am I writing here about a possible collegiate seminar? Simply because, by analogy, the concept has a lot to do with the aims of *Human Development*. So far in this year-old publishing venture, if we measure in terms of subscriptions, we have been successful to a degree that has surpassed our most sanguine hopes. At the time our first issue appeared, after very little advance publicity, we had 3,000 subscribers. The second issue went out to 4,000 addresses and the third to 5,000; this issue will be received by more than 7,000, not counting those who will read it in an edition soon to be published in Spanish. Nevertheless, in a way we have hardly begun to achieve what we had in mind when inaugurating the journal. What we envisioned was

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more than a widely read series of articles written especially for people who are functioning as contributors to the personality and character development of others. We have also tried to create a vehicle of exchange in which our readers, through the pages of *Human Development*, may share with one another specific things that are being done within their various settings to foster the maturation of seminarians and members of religious communities, the reasons for and results of these efforts, what modifications have been made, and what has been learned from experience. In our editorials we have invited our readers to participate in this type of dialogue, but so far there has been little in our pages that presents a picture of the "experiments" being tried and conducted by formation personnel and religious superiors out there where the action is.

It might be timely, in view of the difficulty we are experiencing in bringing our readers into a dialogue with *Human Development*, to face one of the major problems confronting people who are responsible for helping others to reach spiritual, moral, and personal maturity in a religious environment. The problem is similar to that facing the college campus adults who want to do all they can to help students reach a well-rounded maturity; it is the difficult question of determining who makes the attempt to help whom, at what moment, and in what specific way? To illuminate the growth-fostering process, countless suggestions have been offered during recent years from widely divergent sources (for example, Esalen, est, Jung), many of them conflicting. Principally, however, it has been the theories and forms of therapy proposed by contemporary psychologists and psychiatrists that have occasioned many if not most of the relatively recent changes that have occurred in religious formation programs. In the past quarter of a century, those who have closely observed the steadily evolving formation scene have seen one new theory after another attract the interest and influence the decisions of personnel working in religious development. All too often each new theory or technique served as a signal to abandon whatever had been learned from earlier authoritative sources.

## PSYCHOANALYTIC AND ROGERIAN INSIGHTS

First it was Freud. But despite the fact that the father of psychoanalysis had taught practically everyone in the Western world that human beings have an unconscious mind, a superego, Oedipal tendencies, drives that can be separated into sexual and aggressive types, and unconscious conflicts, it was not clear even in the 1950s that the impact of his message was being widely reflected in the way young religious and seminarians were being trained. Indeed, few formation personnel (mistresses of novices, tertian instructors, etc.) were adept at understanding and dealing with what was hap-

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## Who makes the attempt to help whom, at what moment, and in what specific way?

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pening in the unconscious mental depths of those in their care, although some were able to recognize accurately a person's indeliberate use of such defense mechanisms as rationalization, denial, and regression. During those years, Freud's doctrine was still highly suspect among religious persons; he was well known as an atheist, found no place for the supernatural in his understanding of human functioning, denied that the will is ever free, and considered people's belief in God to be nothing more than evidence of their use of the mental mechanism of projection.

But along came psychologist Carl Rogers who had at one time decided upon a career within the ministry of his fundamentalist Christian church. In his client-centered therapy, he presented a method that could readily be used by formation personnel to help others solve their problems. Rogers believes that although the experiences people have had in the past can influence the way they perceive the present, their attention in both problem-solving and living should be focused principally upon what is happening in the here and now. In his theory of personality he posits just one fundamental need: to actualize, maintain, and enhance all aspects of the individual. For Rogers, the goal of life is growth, an increasing complexity of functioning that enables persons to become all they are capable of becoming. He has called the process of becoming oneself "self-actualization," and sees this as consisting in developing one's unique psychologic potential and characteristics.

People in helping roles learned from Rogers to appreciate that a healthy personality is a process,

not a state of being—"a direction, not a destination." Self-actualization is never a finished or static condition. It is a difficult and sometimes painful process, one that involves a continuous testing, stretching, and prodding of a person's capabilities. The lives of self-actualized persons are full of meaning, challenge, and enrichment, and they are truly themselves. They do not live merely according to the prescriptions and expectations of others. Rogers sees the fully functioning person as capable of experiencing a wide range of positive and negative emotions (e.g., joy and sadness), as living fully and flexibly in every moment of existence, and with spontaneity and freedom in actions that feel right rather than in those that are dictated by reason alone. From Rogers religious helpers also learned to stop advising people about what actions they should take to solve their problems and instead began to help them make decisions by analyzing all the various aspects of themselves—those that can be brought to consciousness as well as those already there, and those that are emotional along with those that are cognitive. Personal help, by Rogerian standards, is best provided by an empathetic listener, one who reports and reflects the thoughts and feelings of the persons being assisted. The depth to which self-exploration can proceed is dependent on the level of mutual trust that prevails in the helping relationship. Most people who adopted Rogers' principles were convinced that a great deal of good could result from them and that the technique—even in the hands of the less experienced—was unlikely to prove harmful in any way.

#### **ABRAHAM MASLOW AND ROLLO MAY**

Another psychologist who later became popular among formation personnel was Abraham Maslow. Like Rogers, Maslow viewed all human beings as possessing an innate tendency to become self-actualizing; but he went further by proposing a now widely known hierarchy of needs that must be met if a person's development is to be complete. This concept appealed strongly to many religious people, since—after satisfaction of basic needs related to physiology, safety, and security, feelings of belonging, love and esteem—a person, according to Maslow, is drawn by his impulses toward goodness, justice, and unity. The episodic "peak experiences," which he described as transforming self-actualized individuals suddenly and unexpectedly into full and transcending humanness, were found by Maslow to turn the person undergoing them away from aggression and self-destructiveness and to bring them into close contact with their true self, their being, and even their God. He maintained that it is possible for self-actualized persons to achieve a sustained sense of plateau-living in which they can "live casually in heaven and be on easy terms with the eternal and the infinite." It seems hardly sur-

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**Self-actualized  
persons can "live  
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the infinite."**

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prising that Maslow's psychology attracted the interest of religious persons who, through it, came to appreciate how essential the satisfaction of human needs is to the process of attaining full human growth. Like Rogers, he presented a very appealing model of human nature, as demonstrated in the lives of self-actualized persons—creative, positive, and healthy—a model that can easily generate optimism and inspire enthusiasm among those striving to foster human development.

Rollo May became popular with many religious people involved in the enterprise of formation; as an existentialist, he too stressed the central importance of the concept of "becoming" and the process of self-development, or fulfilling one's potential. This process, according to May, unfolds as a result of the self's making deliberate choices that determine the course of self-fulfillment; through them a person creates his own nature or essence. May contributed to the widespread use of the term "transcendence," signifying by it the capacity of the existential self to surpass its prior level of self-development. Under his influence, many spiritual directors and formation personnel learned to demonstrate convincingly that they valued and accepted the people they were helping, and urged them to commit themselves courageously to making vigorous decisions that would bring their human potential to mature fulfillment.

#### **ERIKSON, JUNG, AND FRANKL**

Probably more than any other behavioral scientist, Erik Erikson has profoundly influenced the way personality development is currently being

fostered within religious communities in the United States. His familiar epigenetic theory presents the various stages of the life cycle as a series of phases or crises that demand for their completion a successful accomplishment of all the earlier life tasks that serve as prerequisites for further human growth. Thus, a mature person who is capable of being what today would be called a "person for others" (termed "generative" by Erikson) would need to have developed at earlier stages in life such qualities as having a capacity for trusting, being autonomous, taking initiative, having a sense of personal identity, and being capable of relating to others with intimacy—that is, a deep sharing of mind and heart. Ten years ago, when serious concern was expressed by the American bishops re-

garding the level of psychosexual and social development being achieved by diocesan and religious priests, it was Erikson's model of the person and human development that the research team used as a standard for measurement. In more recent years, his insights have become increasingly influential in shaping the thinking and practice of many spiritual directors and formation teams; the worldwide popularity of such writings as the one published by Father George Ganss, S.J., under the title "Affectivity and Sexuality" in the series *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* (March 1978), gives testimony to this fact.

Anyone familiar with the recent history of the influence of psychology on personal religious development knows that Carl Jung's ideas have

## CONTEMPORARY SOURCES OF IMPACT



gained expanding popularity, especially in regions where there are schools of theology operated under Christian auspices. Jung insisted that the “general neurosis of our time” results from the loss of a spiritual connection with our past, and the only cure he offered consists of a renewal of contact with the unconscious forces of our personalities. Also increasingly appreciated among religious people are the writings of Viktor Frankl, whose views sound in some ways directly antithetical to Jung’s, especially when he maintained that being fully human means relating to someone or something beyond one’s self. He saw our major motivation in life as being a search, not for self but for *meaning*, and this entails a “forgetting” of ourselves. For him, the only way to become self-actualizing is through fulfilling a meaning beyond the self.

### GROUP DYNAMICS AND HUMAN POTENTIAL MOVEMENTS

Other strong influences on religious and spiritual formation have come from the group dynamics movement and the human potential movement, which in some ways overlap. There is hardly a community or seminary in which some sort of group experience has not been undertaken and aimed at developing people’s ability to listen to others more carefully and acceptingly, to understand themselves more deeply, to express their feelings more openly and spontaneously, and to help one another solve some of the problems in their lives. Even the ideas of such an offbeat human-potential guru as the late Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls have had an impact on religious organizations and institutions. His best insights are useful truths that have found widespread application all over the religious world. For example, he believed that every organism tends toward wholeness or completion, that balance within the human organism must be maintained in the interest of mental health, that self-awareness can lead to the development and growth of a healthy personality, that mature persons are able to accept their own impulses and yearnings, and that a well-developed person focuses his attention on what is here and now rather than living in the past or anxiously dwelling on a not-yet-real future. Perls’ insistence that we should not be bothered by anxiety over what may happen tomorrow sounds much like the lesson Jesus tried to teach when He used the lilies of the field as an example. Perls’ emphasis on the importance of learning to use our senses to stay in touch with the real world around us, rather than indulging in a life of fantasies, fears, and prejudices, is just as valuable for a Christian person’s development as his dogmatic stand that we must stay in touch with present realities that surround us no matter how painful facing up to them might be.

He also points to something of special importance for spiritual directors when he states that

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**Jesus emphasizes the importance of learning to use our senses to stay in touch with the real world around us.**

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many individuals are unable to accept that some of their thoughts, feelings, and desires truly belong to them, and so they disown them; by thus disavowing or alienating these facets of themselves, they consequently render themselves unable to function as complete persons. Psychologist Duane Schultz, in his book *Growth Psychology: Models of the Healthy Personality*, summarizes Perls’ teaching: “Supremely healthy individuals have rejected or discarded none of their potential; it is all available for use. Such persons are in touch with all aspects of their selves and find none of them offending or threatening. Healthy persons are fully themselves, fully aware, and fully in use.” Such a statement makes Perls’ doctrine sound as though it could be readily harmonized with the spiritual practice of trying to get in touch with one’s own deep feelings and yearnings, and, rather than ignore them, to place them before God in prayer so as to discover what to do with them according to His desires—in other words, as Perls would prescribe, to put them to use.

With practically no effort at all, we could find dozens of other psychologist-authors who have influenced religious life and formation programs through their insights into human nature; for example, Gordon Allport, Erich Fromm, Karen Horney, B.F. Skinner, Eric Berne, Albert Ellis, William Glover, and Eugene Kennedy. It would be impossible to live a day in a house of religious formation without finding numerous signs of the influence all these contemporaries have had on the way we train our young candidates for a vowed life and for the priesthood in this country. But often these people

are not given full credit for their contributions. In fact, the anti-Christian reputation of a number of them blocks recognition of their influence.

### CONTRIBUTIONS CAN GET LOST

But there is a different and more serious problem confronting us. Obviously, not everything that behavioral scientists such as Rogers, Maslow, May, Frankl, Jung, Erikson, and Perls have written can be put to use by religious people who are trying to help others to grow. And in the future, new authoritative voices will be heard, at times supplementing and at times contradicting the views of such writers as these. There is a danger that the valuable contributions of these and other scientists will be too quickly set aside and lost sight of. This may sound pessimistic, but let me give an example of how fad-dish some religious leaders can be. Not long ago I was talking with a major superior of a large religious congregation of men. He was complaining that the middle-aged members of his community were not finding it possible to tell him openly what they were really thinking and how they were actually feeling in response to some of the changes still taking place within their houses and institutions. He praised the younger men for being "much more honest in communicating their ideas and feelings," then asked what could be done to encourage the older men to communicate more openly and profoundly. I asked him whether there was anyone in his congregation trained to conduct group experiences in developing communication skills. "We did all that group dynamic stuff ages ago," he exclaimed with amazement. And again I realized that many religious people are fad-followers just as he is; they go for what is in vogue, then discard it when the fashion changes, much the way people do with clothes.

It is certainly true that fewer people participate in group experiences today than did 10 to 15 years ago. There are also fewer people receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation and attending Sunday Mass. However, just because fewer people are taking advantage of these opportunities, it certainly does not prove that the group experiences have lost their power to achieve desirable results. Nevertheless, practices such as keeping personal journals, attending Sadhana workshops, and meditating while jogging will just as surely drift into oblivion as have the once popular Volkswagen "bug," transatlantic passenger liners, the Sodality of Our Lady, and the Apostleship of Prayer leaflets.

My point is simply this: if some type of practice or experience has proved helpful as an instrument for religious formation—for example, one that has enabled novices, seminarians, and persons in later stages of progress to advance toward spiritual, moral, or apostolic maturity—it should not be abandoned merely because the secular world is tiring of it or finds it no longer commercially lucrative. In other words, there are some formation

strategies and experiments that, having been found effective, deserve to be perpetuated. But I would not want to see these confined strictly within the congregation or seminary that has discerned their value; instead, I would hope that whatever is found useful would be shared with other formation staffs throughout the world. We have come once again to the primary reason for *Human Development's* existence; we want this journal to be an instrument for exchanging precisely this sort of information.

### TOTAL REJECTION INAPPROPRIATE

The insights of psychologists such as those mentioned above will also soon be lost unless we make special efforts to preserve them. Anyone who studied theology in a Catholic seminary 20 or more years ago will appreciate what I'm going to say. Those of us who were striving to learn the established truths in that important and venerable academic discipline were taught to state a thesis, prove it from reason, sacred Scripture, writings of the Church Fathers, and official Church documents (encyclicals, decrees), then to quickly deal with all the writers or groups down through the ages who held a position contrary to what we had just proved. We would name the "adversary," refer to a heresy-tinged line or two from his works, then pass on to the next adversary whom we would dispatch with equal abruptness. Unfortunately (I can see all too clearly now), this procedure in no way encouraged us to study seriously the wisdom and insight of those generally brilliant thinkers rather than concentrating only on the statements we regarded as theological errors. Instead of associating Zwingli, Huss, Luther, Calvin, and countless others only with what we were taught was objectionable in their offerings, we should have been encouraged to look through their eyes, see reality against the background affecting their vision, make our own the truths they recognized, and only then discard those ideas that seemed for some reason unacceptable from a Catholic perspective.

As students of theology, our attitude toward those whose positions threatened our own was the same as that of some of today's religious toward psychologists such as those we have been considering. Because they adopt certain stands or—generally by omission—make certain errors, they are condemned totally by their righteous critics. Inevitably, to some extent there is right and wrong in those writers' presentation of what comprises and what goes on within a person. However, there is a growing trend to brand much of the recent humanistic psychology movement as if it were a heretical threat to the well-being of the Church and its ideals. Particularly alarming is the widespread response to a book that has advocated precisely this sort of generalized rejection. The book, *Psychology as Religion*, by New York University psychologist Paul Vitz, has influenced many readers to focus on

the potentially misguiding elements in contemporary theories rather than to discriminate between what is true and useful and what is not. Vitz maintains that the theories of the self proposed by Rogers, Maslow, May, Fromm, and others within the realm of current psychology and the human potential movement are encouraging a "cult of self-worship" and amount to nothing less than a religion that is competing with Christianity. He is right, of course, in calling attention to the fact that, taken alone, each of these theories would fail to provide a straight track toward salvation; they do fail to take into consideration the depths and relations (for example, with God and baptized neighbors) that Christian teachings illuminate. But he does his readers an intellectual disservice by not encouraging them to look for those things that are true about human nature and human development that these writers have discovered and made known.

### HUMAN POTENTIAL NARCISSISM

Another critic of the human potential movement, and of Fritz Perls in particular, is psychiatrist Stephen Applebaum of the Menninger Foundation in Topeka, Kansas, who in 1979 wrote the very informative book *Out in Inner Space: A Psychoanalyst Explores the New Therapies*. Applebaum regards Perls' "Gestalt Prayer" as indicative of the narcissism in the movement. This prayer has found its way, in the form of a poster, onto the walls of countless college dormitories and student counseling offices. It reads: "I do my thing and you do your thing. I am not in this world to live up to your expectations, and you are not in this world to live up to mine. You are you and I am I. If by chance we find each other, it's beautiful. If not, it can't be helped." Applebaum finds these lines presumably intended as a statement of yogic detachment, "a welcome for those people who are tied to one another through guilt, who take on undue and unwarranted responsibility for others on the basis of neurotic fantasies rather than real need." He also sees the prayer as a potential teaching aid "in overcoming the loss of self that so many people suffer through designing their life according to the wishes of others, rather than hammering out their own philosophy and recognizing their own wishes." Still seeking value in the prayer, Applebaum finds its message, at a more primitive level, capable of being used to bring about healthy separation, since it can be interpreted as "a statement of the recognition that one need not be dependent on another for survival."

I like Applebaum's readiness to try to find a constructive, useful application of Perls' thoughts. At the same time, he is realistic; he detects the prayer's narcissistic overtones and recognizes that it can be read as "a declaration of solipsistic independence, the kind of self-preoccupation that re-

sults in heedlessness to the plight of others." It could also be heard as "a snarling declaration that the other person is not worthy of any more than a chance encounter."

In line with Applebaum's last remarks, Donald Campbell, president of the American Psychological Association, has expressed the belief that in contemporary American society a "non optimal production of underinhibited, overly narcissistic and overly selfish individuals" is occurring, with psychology deserving a large amount of blame. He stated in 1975, "There is in psychology today a general background assumption that the human impulses provided by biological evolution are right and optimal, both individually and socially, and that repressive or inhibitory moral traditions are wrong. This assumption may now be regarded as scientifically wrong. Psychology, in propagating this background perspective in its teaching of perhaps 80 or 90 percent of college undergraduates, and increasing proportions of high school and elementary school pupils, helps to undermine the retention of what may be extremely valuable social-evolutionary inhibitory systems which we do not yet fully understand." As a psychologist himself, Campbell admits that there is "social functionality and psychological validity to the concepts of sin and temptation and of original sin due to human carnal, animal nature." Many of the young men and women entering our seminaries and novitiates these days have received the sort of psychological education that Campbell deplors.

### COMPLAINTS AGAINST HUMAN POTENTIAL MOVEMENT

Even though, as I mentioned earlier, it would be wise for people working in religious formation to preserve the useful ideas and techniques of humanistic psychologists and the pioneers of the human potential movement (Rogers, Maslow, May, Perls, et al) rather than reject them out of hand because of their shortcomings, it is equally important, I would think, to keep in mind the criticisms that have been leveled at the human potential leaders by many of their professional colleagues. Applebaum has summarized their litany of complaints as follows: "(1) A feckless prizing of feelings over the intellect, which substitutes mere indulgence of sensory experience for the hard work of conceptual thought. (2) A de-emphasis of the past and future, which deprives the here-and-now of meaning, renders it superficial. (3) A romantic deification of the animal, primitive and child, as if a child could really lead us along the torturous path laid out by the exigencies of the real world. (4) The positing of a sublimely ineffable self that transcends mere social role, while in fact such a self is defined in part by social role and cannot exist independent of it. (5) 'Communicating' and 'relating' become ends rather than means, as if the acts of

'communicating' and 'relating' are in themselves valuable regardless of what is communicated and why one is relating himself to someone or something. (6) A language that gaily invites one to camaraderie while debasing the pursuit of meaning. (7) The belief that the sky is the limit for a human's potential and achievable merely through the power of positive thinking, which turns attention away from practical, pragmatic means of bringing about change. (8) The assertion that the way to change social ills is through changing individual consciousness rather than working directly on such social ills, which may also reflect an indifference to social problems."

The most central criticism of human potential thinking centers around its alleged narcissism, the tendency toward exaggerated concern over the self with consequent disregard of the needs, condition, and concerns of others. Some psychologists see this type of self-preoccupation as inherited from Eastern mysticism. Anthropologist V.S. Naipaul, in his book *India: A Wounded Civilization*, calls Hinduism a "pernicious fantasy." He believes, as Applebaum has understood him, that "its romanticized personal detachment, its glorification of selflessness, is actually a selfish preoccupation that keeps the culture from examining and knowing itself. Self-centered escape is substituted for real history and real problems. Asceticism as a personal discipline, and to encourage better meditation, is allowed to proliferate into an indifference toward deprivation everywhere and in all forms." At present there is some evidence that Hinduism is increasingly affecting American Catholic spirituality and not just the human potential movement's particular brand of psychology.

## POSSIBLE FORMATION PITFALLS

For the person who wants to shape the development of others in the direction of full Christian maturity, the task of extracting what is helpful and rejecting what is harmful from psychology is not an easy one. Through the pages of *Human Development*, we hope to provide useful guidance in response to the questions and reports on experiences and experiments that our readers present to us. But there are two further perils to be kept in mind where formation efforts are being undertaken. The first is the assumption that religious people's behavior is springing from motivation that is "mature" simply because, on the surface, their actions appear to match the popular image of Christian adulthood. (We will feature an article on the signs and nature of true maturity in a future issue.) The other peril is that of being too idealistic, or too abstract, in trying to achieve the task of religious formation. Certainly a spirituality that is built solidly upon Christian principles is a prerequisite for people seriously desiring to grow, with God's help, to the fullest extent they can. The lives of

## The task of extracting what is helpful and rejecting what is harmful from psychology is not an easy one.

Christ and the saints provide ample embodiment of these fundamentals, and the example of those who have founded the various religious congregations bear witness to the specific charism God has bestowed on them and their spiritual offspring. The obvious temptation for many who are involved in the work of formation is to point to certain qualities—for example, patience, perseverance, courage, humility, a spirit of poverty—and to simply exhort those in their care to pray and strive for such virtues.

A comparable kind of idealizing might be seen in a person's holding up a theology and encouraging others to live accordingly. This is easily done with appealing writings such as those by Father Karl Rahner. When he argues that all of life for human beings is meant to be a process of "becoming," and that this maturation consists in self-actualizing our potentialities principally through human, interpersonal love, Rahner is maintaining, as his disciples know well, that "the love of God and the love of neighbor are one and the same thing." The temptation, in suggesting to others that they learn to live by such insights, is to turn the enterprise over to them after saying something like "you'd better learn to love your neighbor and beg God to help you do so; your religious development depends on how well you learn to love."

## PRACTICAL STEPS REQUIRED

There is certainly nothing wrong with holding up the qualities of Christ, saints, and founders along with theologic principles of spiritual growth; we all

need these as guideposts and inspiration for our lives. But what we also need, if we are actually to develop these same qualities in ourselves and to incorporate these principles into the core of our being, is help in learning just how to accomplish this. It is easy enough to decide to become a loving person, for example, and to desire and pray that spontaneity and generosity like that of Jesus will characterize my own loving service of my neighbor. But who will show me how to go beyond the ideal and understand what concrete steps I have to take to overcome my lack of spontaneity and my deep-seated selfishness? Who will help me to devise a series of experiences or experiments that will enable me to see such goodness in my neighbors that I will love them intensely and be ready to share with them unsparingly all that God has given me to share? Who knows how to help me concretize the ideals of Christianity so that I can develop the habits (virtues) that will make them part of my very nature and powerful expressions of my soul?

Men and women all over the world, acting as facilitators of human religious development, are in fact working continually to help others to acquire the qualities that characterize the idealized sister, brother, or priest they want to become, and are trying to help them learn to demonstrate these traits concretely and habitually in their everyday lives. In accomplishing this task they are helping those they guide to devise real-life situations into which they can enter, with a hope of developing the qualities of personality or character they seek. They are assisting some to learn patience in this way, and others courage or justice; they are aiding some to become magnanimous, others to develop trust or compassion. In most instances their problem is to remove the inner obstacles blocking the formation of these qualities. Their perennial efforts are directed toward finding creative ways of constructing what could be termed "experiments for growth," some of which turn out to be remarkably successful and others that terminate as surprising failures. These experiences are what we are asking our readers to share. Most people doing formation work have all the ideals they need; what many would welcome, I am sure, are insights into new, concrete ways of facilitating specific kinds of growth.

### **CREATIVE EXPERIMENT EXEMPLIFIED**

It might be helpful to give a single, simple example of the kind of creative experiment I have been trying to describe. A priest I was attempting to help had grown up with such a need to be liked by everyone that he found himself feeling downhearted and resentful every time he detected even the slightest trace of a negative attitude toward him. His days were repeatedly spoiled by what he interpreted as signs of hostility or rejection. His efforts to please were inordinate, and inevitably at times unsuccessful. But how could he learn to accept the

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complaints, criticisms, and coldness that come from time to time into every person's life, especially one devoted to ministry? My obvious task was to help him find his way into some sort of situation that would enable him to realize and eventually accept the fact that nobody can please everyone, and that it is possible for a person to feel good about himself and his accomplishments even while some individuals are openly showing their dislike for what he is doing. Together we tried to imagine a situation in which he could work for others who would have a great need for his services, but one in which he would repeatedly find himself pleasing some and displeasing others. It would have to involve circumstances in which he would be able to tell himself, "I can't possibly please them all and I don't need to," since even those who would feel negatively toward him at some moments would in the same situation at later times feel very positively disposed.

We finally came up with a plan: he would offer his services for a season as an umpire in a softball league. The decisions he would have to make (e.g., calling each pitch a ball or a strike, or declaring base runners either safe or out) would be sure to please some of the players and alienate others. Since his contribution to the games would be indispensable, he would continually feel needed by all on both teams. So he took the job of umpire, learned to live, game by game, with the appreciation mixed with hostile complaints, and at the end of the season felt that he had succeeded in eradicating his dependence on everyone's approval. He had developed a habitual, calming realization that when

a person is doing something he knows others need, he can take justifiable pride in his efforts and like himself, even though—every day of the week—some people will be dissatisfied and complaining. This was the experiment, and, I'm happy to say, it worked for the man. He became far less frequently discouraged, less resentful, happier, and more loving.

### WORKSHOP FOR FORMATION PERSONNEL

This article began by considering the possibility of a seminar on some college or university campus to help the adults who influence the students develop their human potential as fully as possible in that setting. We looked at some of the many ways the same psychologists who are affecting the lives of these college students are also helping to shape the personal development of seminarians and young religious in our country as well as abroad. Not all that the "new psychology" has brought forward is to be adopted without question, but many of the insights and techniques of contemporary authorities are proving useful to formation personnel, whose task is to be idealistic and inspirational but also practical and innovative in helping those in their care to find concrete ways, through experiences and experiments, to develop the virtues they seek. Perhaps a workshop should be designed for formation personnel that will provide an opportunity for them to improve their skill in devising experiments to develop the qualities the young men and women in their care will undoubtedly need.

I want to close by repeating our invitation to all our readers to help us make *Human Development* more useful by contributing their own insights, experiences, experiments, problems, and solutions so that thousands can compare their own efforts and come away enriched. We will continue to feature diverse types of articles, or course, just as we have done in past issues. But we want and need your letters, articles, memos, book reviews, and any other form of communication. The usefulness of this venture—potentially affecting the lives of millions—depends principally on you. Our privilege is to be the link that will connect you, our readers, with one another.

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# THE WAY OF US: THREE TAKES

James Torrens, S.J.

He stands arms folded, chewing,  
but the eyes rove. Need arises  
and he's there. People fussing  
about this and this and that—he's all  
patience, tact. The salesmen  
absorb it. If he, with his boxer's  
face, winks! And home late,  
grizzled, he invites odd jobs.  
Sundays they ask him, Line up  
the ushers, or Count change. He does.

Still, who knows? His bookkeeper  
thieves time for him from her books,  
he deals quietly with a fence,  
falls hard on his awkward son.  
His doberman shows teeth. Drink  
turns him sour. He hires  
applicants by their looks.

But the longings!  
If only me and the wife  
could match. Or a voice urges him  
"Spit it up. All."  
And taking the trash out  
late, his eyes stray overhead—  
he forgets himself. Rescues  
excite him. "If we have  
to go, that's how!"

\* Poem reprinted from *The San Francisco Quarterly*, Spring, 1980

"Y

ou meet a lot of nice people"—on lucky days that phrase spontaneously comes out of us. We encounter a pleasant neighbor, an accommodating clerk, a civil servant who actually is; even, perchance, a waiter or waitress who notices when we signal. This is what keeps us going. Your car stalls in traffic and somebody appears behind you to push you out of danger, a person sturdier than yourself volunteers to help you lift something, you get greeted by an old friend in a strange place. Onto the shelf for a time goes your awareness of the rude and self-centered children of the earth. Those Norman Rockwell days actually do turn up.

We are especially kept going by the people we look up to, the small-scale (or even large-scale) hero types who move in and out of our lives. Some of us have been able to grow up with them—a gallant and generous uncle, a wise aunt who somehow did not seem an elder at all and on our side but with no nonsense. In our adult years we come to admire single parents with unruly children, people who take ill health lightly, others doing impossible jobs and making them look manageable. Not everyone is blessed with such models, but they still do appear and still can be spoken of in gospel terms as the salt of the earth.

But when the salt loses its savor! We find out unpleasant things often, even about our heroes, that sour our taste for goodness. For example, we go way out on a limb for someone we trust only to find them unfaithful to their end of the bargain. We ourselves are taken advantage of. Some nice person shows a mean streak; another one turns cold over money. We learn unflattering facts and sides of people on whom we have modeled ourselves. This takes a far greater toll on our optimism about the human project than the district vandals or the tin god supervisors that life throws our way. As a case in point, consider how raw and unhealed is the wound left in recent years by priests and sisters abruptly relinquishing their commitment. Many who showed previous strain and whose choice came from slow, honest decision are readily comprehensible; but the instances of sudden fallout have left many shaken.

Literary fiction mirrors our human reality and often throws up to us images of the dark side of man brought to light. Henry James, in his novel *What Maisie Knew*, shows us a precocious child shuttled back and forth between separated and warring parents, with knowledge forced upon her

Father Torrens, S.J. has recently completed his term as rector of the Jesuit Community at the University of San Francisco, where he also teaches English.

that she cannot absorb. How guarded and warped in her dealings with people we may expect Maisie to be, growing to adulthood. Equally bleak panoramas come to us from Jerzy Kosinski, with his grisly accounts of the spoliation of World War II Poland, from many writers out of the urban ghettos, and from a whole series of more mainstream writers bent on showing the viciousness just beneath our veneer of urbanity.

It still hurts to be reminded, but the news is not new. Some basic misgivings about man seem legitimized by Scripture itself. After all, our Lord Himself, when urged to take leadership of a crowd full of enthusiasm, is said not to have trusted Himself to them, "for He knew what was in man." St. Paul tells us clearly enough what is in man—the passions, or blind movements of *sarx*, "the flesh," and the calculations, or *dianoiai*, of the schemer. But it is easy to miss the central message. Paul's statement about us in our bereft condition, i.e., as "by nature children of wrath," is a parenthesis within the enveloping assurance that "God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, brought us to life together with Christ" (Eph. 2:4-5).

Nathaniel Hawthorne introduces us to the pathology of gloom with his remarkable short story, "Young Goodman Brown." The upstanding Puritan, young man Brown, leaves behind an anxious new wife named Faith and, trusting to his powers, goes off to walk the dark woods with a suspicious traveler. Along the way this companion, described as an older version of himself, entertains him with malicious gossip, with sounds and visions that implicate all the good people of Salem, among them Brown's pious ancestors, as being in league and hidden sympathy with the Evil One. Brown comes to see all these good people as tending and flocking with him to a witches' sabbath, where his own Faith waits to join him in a sinister communion.

The upshot of Hawthorne's story is that Brown's own unfaithfulness, his initial complicity even while asserting independence, leads him farther and farther away from faith in the men and women of the religious society about him. He is able to scent out their hidden sins, but this impulse toward detection quickly exaggerates and distorts. Hawthorne's point, says the critic Francis O. Matthiessen, is that "mere doubt of the existence of good, the thought that all other men are evil, can become such a corrosive force as to eat out the life of the heart." This is the serpent's message of old, "You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." After the fall Adam and Eve found the world much bleaker than the garden of naive innocence.

The New Testament makes clear that a godlike existence, but of a quite different sort, is indeed held out to us by the One who works us like yeast, makes us His workmanship, preserves and stimulates the good in our nature. The Creator, after all, looked at His works and saw that we were indeed good. Our later waywardness was itself preceded, in God's timeless gaze, by the determination of a cure. The original garden, quickly riddling with weeds and given over to scrub growth, retains its potential; it is meant still to be good earth. The Lord's husbandry does not remain fruitless.

Yes, the deepest fact about men and women is their yearning for goodness, their groaning and calling out to be freed from all addictions and hurtful patterns in their doing, and thinking, and being. In us, in our troubled and begging condition, the whole of creation pleads for its redemption. The parable of the sower and the seed, inscribed as it is with the reality of men's very different responses, also affirms the basically fertile state of the ground, ourselves. God sows His word, issues His call, draws us to Himself with delight, entices us not to what is called "the good life," among the thorns of passion and contention, but to a new spirit of which St. Paul lists the components: "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23).

Life by these standards makes a deep appeal to us. Mother Teresa ministering to *les misérables* on the sidewalks of Calcutta calls to something latent and powerful in us. I, myself, growing up, was deeply affected by a man of Italian peasant origin, close to our family, who while working in a shipyard threw himself upon a fellow worker to save him from a wildly swinging crane and took the whole fatal brunt of it himself.

We still see transformation. People sunk in some addiction, despair, foul companionship or way of acting, come to grace with immense relief and joy, like Zacchaeus bouncing down from the sycamore tree at our Lord's invitation. Their potential has finally been called up. Augustine, theologian of grace, commenting on John's gospel puts it best: "Each one's desire draws him . . . and what does the soul desire more than truth? Are we to say that Christ, revealed and set before us by the Father, does not draw us? . . . Why else does the soul have hungry jaws, a spiritual palate?" More than the body's senses and the brain's calculations, "the heart has its loves." It is the Lord's own true way and person, attracting us powerfully, that constitute the self most truly. The self-styled realists, who insistently show us our blind side, need to walk to where the openings are and enter in.

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# Book Reviews

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*The Jesus Story: Our Life as Story in Christ*, by John Navone, Collegeville, Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 1979, 244 pp., \$8.50.

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This book is the fruit of over ten years of research that has led its author, together with other Americans like John Dunne, Stanley Hauerwas, John Haught, and Michael Novak, to uncover progressively the implications and significance of story as it presents itself in literature, in our self-understanding, and in every dimension of human life.

Fundamental to human experience is the book's narrative quality, which suggests that reality reveals itself as basically comprehensible and that it is not ultimately absurd. This is the insight on which John Navone's analysis of story is founded. Man as a historical being knows himself as he truly is through the stories he hears about himself and in the stories he recounts about himself. In our stories we make sense of our experiences, articulate our hopes for the future, and express the values we hold most dearly. As Navone affirms: "Everyone has some vision or other of God (ultimate reality), world, man and salvation which he attains in the concreteness of experience and, in turn, radiates at every level of his being. Vision permeates our thoughts, desires, interests, ideals, imagination, feelings and body language; it is our world view, our sense of life, our basic orientation towards reality."

Of particular interest are Part II (pp 75-130) and Part III. In Part II the author deals with travel stories, which he calls "the Bible's preferred kind of story." Chapter 6 describes the basic structure of biblical travel stories: the journey from a situation of homelessness to home, inspired by the Spirit of God and sustained by faith, hope, and love. In the journey itself, the pilgrim grows in spiritual maturity if he has the fortitude necessary to meet the challenge of the journey. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with the language and phenomenology of travel

stories, and Chapter 9 discusses the medieval allegories as travel stories devised to express the growth of man in spiritual comprehension.

Both the biblical travel story and the medieval allegory were devised to express the process of spiritual enlightenment in men's lives. As Navone puts it, "both offer their readers a kind of spiritual exercise that enables them to participate in a process of psychic redemption." The whole force of Navone's argument is to show the concept of travel story as an anthropological structure that is basic to human reality as such. It is because of this that travel stories of religious experience can speak to man at such a deep level of his being.

In Part III Navone unfolds the meaning, for the Christian, of what he has established in Part II. This, in fact, is the richest part of the book, since the great pillars of Christian belief are reexpressed in a startlingly new and yet thoroughly authentic way. Thus Navone can say, for example, "The many stories which Jesus told, like his entire life story, invite us to put the whole of ourselves into his image of and feeling for ourselves, others, the world, and God, and to make the content of that image his own. We are invited to share the same dynamic orientation that was Jesus' way of imagining and experiencing the world, retelling the truth of his story by re-imagining and re-experiencing it in his way. We are invited to accept his story as the structure or context for our faith's imaging and experiencing the stage of life as we move through the finite, the definite and the detailed in quest of our true story." And "The certitude of Christian hope is a sure tendency towards our true story. It involves the tension of an anticipated initial possession of our true story and a confident waiting for the gift of its final realization."

Navone's theology of story is an attempt to uncover signs of the sacred in the secular. It is founded on the insight that "grace builds *in* nature" and that men are involved in a grace-filled world and are necessarily answering or resisting the call of God no matter how implicitly that call is experienced.

The value of this particular approach to theologizing is that it deals with a universal dimen-

sion of human reality: man's narrative consciousness. This is a structure so fundamental to man that it encompasses all the modes by which he makes sense of his life and is thus able to live in an ordered and hope-filled way—poetry, drama, literature, religion.

The theology of story is also "theology" in the specific (we might say, dogmatic) sense, in that Christianity is historically revealed and historically based religion. It claims to provide us with our "authentic story"—the authentic meaning of our lives—and consequently to be the norm and paradigm of all our attempts to "tell our story" (literature, myth, drama, poetry). Christianity claims that it provides *the* hermeneutic key that can unlock the meaning of mankind's aspirations, fear, and desires. But because every person has a story to tell, the theologian is first a story listener,

and affirmer: only then does he become a storyteller, a revealer.

The work of John Navone provides the foundations for a new approach to Christian anthropology. Such an approach would be more relevant to our contemporary way of thinking and more open to the dialogue with the world that Vatican II encouraged. Such an anthropology claims to present man's authentic life story, the authentic way of being human (lived paradigmatically by Jesus Christ and individually represented by each of his followers).

Navone's work is one of many signs that Christianity can still be presented in a contemporary and meaningful way. It is difficult to think of other theological disciplines in which fidelity to the Christian faith has been made so relevant.

—Robert Peevey

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*Celibacy, Prayer and Friendship*, by Christopher Kiesling, O. P., New York, Alba House, 1978, 229 pp., paperback, \$5.95.

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"How can anyone resist the pleasures of foreplay and orgasm?" "How can anyone resist frequent and vehement urges for such pleasure?" Today, celibates must often face such questions. Some of us might be able to uncover better answers if we were familiar with Christopher Kiesling's book *Celibacy, Prayer and Friendship*. Or we may mistakenly think we have learned enough from his 1970 article under a similar title in the journal *Review for Religious*. Whatever the reason, we should have been tempted by Donald Goergen's 1978 review of Kiesling's volume in the *National Catholic Reporter*: "As a whole, this book is probably the best treatment of celibacy available." This is significant praise from Kiesling's Dominican confrere, whose own volume, *The Sexual Celibate*, has been celebrated as a major step forward in theory on celibacy. Of course, few if any books are flawless. Yet, having read reams of writing on the subject of celibacy, I feel that Goergen's rating of *Celibacy, Prayer and Friendship* should stand.

A caution, though. Those who believe that to renounce genital pleasure is to be forever unfulfilled and who view celibacy as only a canonical burden should stop here. The Kiesling book will not appeal to them. How ironic it would be if, while "the ranks" are agitating to abolish celibacy as a requisite for priesthood, the secular world would turn to it as a rewarding option. That some seculars are so

inclined is the intimation of Gabrielle Brown's *The New Celibacy*, a 1980 best-seller.

What makes *Celibacy, Prayer and Friendship* worthy of a delayed review? First, in an era obsessed with genital sex, the book presents as a refreshing ideal the marvelous yet ever arduous adventure of holistic human loving. And celibate loving is the book's focus. Yet the author treats it as one mode of human loving, often in relation to marital loving, and never as some curious or spurious phenomenon. Second, the author is a man who evidently, both existentially and speculatively, has wrestled with celibate loving. In fact, the book is the result of the author's attempt to discuss his struggles with noncelibates, namely Methodist pastors and their wives, during the summer of 1968. Third, the book's approach is what its jacket says it is: "A making-sense-out-of-life approach." It derives, however, not just from pious reflections, but from roots in psychology, sociology, theology, and spirituality. And finally, proceeding from clear definitions and premises, the book's unfolding is logical, cogent, and smooth. In fact, the style alone might help to rescue from despair John Simon (the author of *Paradigms Lost*) and others who lament the quality of English composition in the United States today.

These are the selling points of *Celibacy, Prayer and Friendship*. They reflect the range of experience and interests of the author, who is a religious priest, a teacher, the editor of *Spirituality Today*, and a writer of a number of current articles on liturgy, ecumenism, and social justice.

Along what lines does the book's development proceed? In the tidy introduction, Kiesling sets his goal: to stimulate each celibate to look into his or her own life in order to bring together the under-

standing and practice of celibacy, prayer, and friendship. He next moves to his definition of celibacy, and, finally, offers his rationale for the ordering of the chapters that follow.

In the first chapter, entitled "The Mysterious Call," Kiesling attempts to answer the question, "Why live celibately?"

The traditional reasons brought forward do not seem compelling. Some of them are generalities which do not move me and are open to so many exceptions in terms of real life and real people that they appear useless. . . .

However, instead of simply dismissing the traditional reasons, Kiesling examines them. He then advances what he considers to be the reason a particular person opts for celibacy. It is not the canned answer, and it may trouble those who find it hard to recognize the divine action in and through the human.

Following upon "The Mysterious Call," Chapter 2 embodies a discussion of how the reasons for celibacy figure into an individual's choice of it. The treatment is interesting, and the concluding paragraph of the chapter merits underscoring. In essence, Kiesling suggests that the validity of the reasons offered for celibacy should not be dismissed too quickly. Simply because someone demonstrates that some values can be found in Christian marriage, he should not infer that they are absent from celibate life.

Celibacy as response and commitment is the subject matter of Chapter 3, a potentially tedious subject that Kiesling handles well. Furthermore, in this section he poses the best rationale for temporary vocation that I have read. Admittedly, not all readers will be prepared to accept the Kiesling perspective.

In "Adventures in Living," one of my favorite chapters, Kiesling addresses fallacies about celibacy. In the process, he tries to dispel the illusion that one or another institution guarantees happiness: "Neither the state of marriage nor that of celibacy substitutes for the personal responsibility to make one's own life." Further on he addresses the challenges that those espousing celibacy are likely to meet. Here he is at his best in relating marriage and celibate love, not placing them in opposition, as many do. He writes that celibacy enjoys no prerogative over humanizing genital sex. Rather, both married and celibate persons are charged with this responsibility, but each in a different way. Both involve a struggle, but each a different one. This section is worth reading slowly, as is the section on intimacy. Perhaps the key message of the chapter is captured in the following:

The adventure in celibacy does not consist, as some suppose, in bearing unfulfilled needs,

namely, want of a loving and understanding spouse. . . ; want of companionship, love, cherishing, intimacy, parenthood. The adventure consists in satisfying the human need for all these things in virtuous ways other than through marriage. . . . The celibate embarks upon service to others in sublimation of his need for genital sexuality and in fulfillment of his need for generativity.

Although the next two chapters on relationships with God and with others are sound doctrine and essential to the whole development, I find they lag a little. This may be due to my long-time reading of this kind of material. However, even this lag is not a major flaw, and the chapters should certainly not be dismissed.

The tempo picks up again in the next chapters, which are the book's finest. Kiesling's clarification of often blurred terms such as affection, agape, love, community, companionship, and friendship; his defense of the celibate's need for affection from persons within and outside his community and ministry; and his treatment of detachment, not exactly a favorite topic today, surprisingly quickens the pace of Chapter 7. "Celibacy is a way of being human. Hence it provides a place for many kinds of love," he asserts near the end of the chapter. No doubt, some readers will regard this observation as too sanguine. Nevertheless, there will be those who will find it motivating and true to their experience. Hopefully, there will be many of these.

The final chapters of the book should prove a godsend to those presently struggling to reconcile a strong and emotionally charged one-on-one relationship with their celibate commitment. At no time does the author promote compromise with commitment, either married or celibate. Instead, without minimizing the difficulties or the risks involved, he endorses love commitments for celibates. The endorsement appears in gems like these:

. . . two people can love one another into religious dedication, including celibacy; . . . celibate dedication and human love are not necessarily incompatible and can be mutually enriching if harmonized. Even for celibates, the initial reaction to potentially wholesome love of any kind ought not to be perplexity before a problem but gratitude for a gift.

However, Chapter 8, "Human Love and Prayer" is not all sweetness and light. Aware that many are "tainted by the standards of the sensate and sex-saturated culture of today," Kiesling says:

[Such persons] presume that if a man and woman love one another, they must to go bed together, in marriage or outside of it. Yet millions of men and women go to bed together without any love for one another.

This is only a sample of the realism found throughout Chapter 8 and, indeed, throughout the entire book.

To remark at length on the remaining three chapters, "Matters of Prudence," "Difficulties in Celibate Love," and "The Spirit of Poverty," would be to belabor them. It is enough to say that they seem to be unique. Some readers will quibble with Kiesling's differentiating pleasure as genital, sensuous (simple and genitally related), and mental. Others, like Goergen, will take issue with Kiesling's use of the term "absolute chastity." Nonetheless, there will be those who find relief in Kiesling's norms for expressions of affection among celibates. Still others will appreciate his argument that chastity is proposed by Christians not because genital pleasure is evil but because the drive to it is so powerful that, if unregulated, it can account for the devastation of individuals, families, and societies. "Any society, if it is going to survive," he writes, "has to regulate the gratification of the desire for this pleasure to ensure justice and peace." Documentation for those who need it can be found in the history texts and in the daily news media.

The last chapter, "The Spirit of Poverty," is a

surprise. Do not miss, as I almost did, what goes before and after the following insight:

Celibates who venture into human love between man and woman or any emotionally powerful love will be miserable under the conditions which celibacy imposes on their love, until they allow some measure of the spirit of poverty to permeate their lives. . . .

Kiesling's linking of celibate love with poverty of spirit is possibly the most creative turn of the book.

Detailed as this review is, it does not begin to reveal all there is in *Celibacy, Prayer and Friendship*. For example, it does not touch on Kiesling's notion of a covenant between the celibate and the loved one. Nor does the review reflect the careful nuances that are found at every turn. What is the long-term prognosis for the book? In all likelihood, it will not soon become outdated. In fact, it should continue to be helpful to formation staffs and their directees, to religious women and men, and to diocesan priests. Indeed, it should prove a boon for anyone interested in the adventure of noble loving.

—Mary Anne Huddleston, I.H.M.

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*Feeling and Healing your Emotions*, by Conrad W. Baars, M.D., Plainfield, N.J. Logos Publishers, 1979, 277 pp. \$7.95.

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It has taken time for the pioneering works of Freud, Jung, and others to reach the mass of people, but there can be no doubt of their impact today. Getting in touch with your feelings has become the slogan of our times, and there are many well-meaning but amateur psychologists who are quick with their advice. Bookstands filled with paperbacks on the subject, advice columns in the papers, encounter groups, charismatic renewal, Prayer of the Heart, T.M., directed retreat movement, Examen of Consciousness—the list is endless. We have come far from the unhealthy position of denying the reality of feelings, of sweeping them under the mat and classifying them as bad or dangerous, and then attempting to live by will or intellect alone. Has the swing been too far? Certainly there are some who exaggerate the importance of feelings, making them the sole basis for decisions. "If it feels right, it is right." "If I feel peace, it is good." There is some truth in these statements, but not the whole truth, and as G. K.

Chesteron said, "Hearsay is making a part truth the whole truth." To accept that feelings are a vital part of a person does not mean that such feelings completely define him. In this Hegelian swing from rejection of feelings to their deification, we need a competent guide to show us where the true synthesis lies. I found *Feeling and Healing Your Emotions* such a guide.

The author is well equipped for this task. He is a practicing clinical psychiatrist with over 20 years of experience. In addition, he is well grounded in Thomistic learning and the humanities, and a convinced Christian with a vision of man that embraces a vision of God as Creator. He thinks clearly, has a good feel for accuracy in the use of words, writes simply, and states his stance openly.

Baars uses a question-and-answer method, together with a clear definition of terms. The influence of Thomas Aquinas is apparent here. The author defines feelings as bodily sensations (as Buddhists do) and emotions as psychic responses. (Some writers have different terminology, but once the meaning is understood, it does not matter.) I like his distinction between humane emotions and utilitarian emotions, and his perception of heart as a combination of intuitive mind and humane emotions. It is so often difficult to grasp what some spiritual writers mean when they speak of heart. He seems to be on new ground as he argues that

repression is caused not by the superego, as Freud said, but by the utilitarian emotions of anger and/or energy. His distinction between rational and neurotic repression of emotion itself is an example of his clear thinking. Many writers seem to think that an emotion must be outwardly expressed. Dr. Baars is most helpful here. Accepting the supremacy of will and intellect, he sees the fully mature person as one who has integrated these faculties with his emotions. He quotes Aquinas: "Virtue is not only in the will and reason, but also in the emotions." A discussion of the difference between temperance (in which feelings are accepted and directed by reason) and continence (in which emotion of desire is repressed) illustrates his point.

An appealing aspect of this book is that it looks at the many movements that are proliferating today. There is a valuable comment on the ministry of inner healing, a just warning of the inadequate education about feelings in marriage encounter

groups, and a helpful discussion of anger, depression, and forgiveness. Deliverances and guilt feelings are touched on, but the reader is left asking for more on both these topics. And the brief reference to voluntarists and the Ignation *agere contra* was too brief and sweeping. I wondered whether the same might be said of the criticisms voiced about other movements.

*Feeling and Healing Your Emotions* is the sort of book I have been waiting for, and I recommend it.

—Frank Wallace, S.J.

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**W**e are happy to report that our number of subscribers has now climbed well above the 7,000 mark. We are still hoping to obtain some financial help from foundations so that we may send *Human Development* to the many persons in developing countries who cannot afford the subscription price but still want very much to receive and make use of our articles.

We have begun to arrange a series of workshops that will expand upon the topics and issues we are treating in this quarterly journal. These programs will be conducted for groups of religious superiors, formation personnel, spiritual directors, pastoral ministers, and persons in other specialized types of work within the Church. Our intention is to establish a fee for these workshops that will cover our team's travel expenses to the locations in North America where they will take place and, at the same time, make possible a series of workshops in the Third World where we will be conducting them without charge. Contact has already been made to provide *Human Development* workshops in New Orleans, Los Angeles, Rome, Africa, and India.

We continue to hope that some of our readers will put us in touch with foundations that will provide financial assistance for our publishing and workshop ventures. We are deeply grateful for all the encouragement and support we have received thus far.

James J. Gill, S.J., M.D.  
Editor-in-Chief